ABSTRACT

WIEGAND, JULIE RENEE. Evaluation of Engagement Among Millennial Consumers with Fashion Brands on Social Media. (Under the direction of Dr. Yingjiao Xu).

The purpose of this study is to further the understanding of young consumers’ engagement behaviors with fashion brands on social media. The velocity at which engagement on social media is growing is monumental, and creating and establishing positive consumer engagement on social media has become a complex paradigm. With the Millennial generation being the largest demographic in the United States and on social media, it is of strategic importance for fashion brands to understand the engagement behaviors of this generation.

This research investigates social media usage among young consumers and the factors that impact their level of engagement with fashion brands. To gain a comprehensive understanding of these engagement behaviors, the following factors were explored: social media usage, motivational factors, perceptions of brand-related activities, fashion consciousness, brand loyalty, and consumer demographics.

This study uses a quantitative approach by distributing an online survey to subjects recruited through social media. SPSS data analysis software was utilized to conduct various tests on the relationships of the data collected from the survey. One-Way ANOVA and Linear Regression Analysis were used to examine the influence of those proposed factors on young consumers’ engagement with fashion brands on social media. Results of this study suggest significant influence of consumers’ intrinsic motivation and their perception of brand’s engagement activities (both reactive and proactive) on their engagement with fashion brands on social media. Additionally, significant influence was found from young consumers’ fashion consciousness on their reactive engagement with fashion brands on
social media, and brand loyalty was found exerting significant influence on young consumers’ proactive engagement with fashion brands on social media.

Findings from this study will not only provide great insights on young consumers’ engagement behavior with fashion brands on social media, but also more importantly will provide great managerial implications to fashion brands in their endeavor to engage young consumers on social media. Limitations of this study are discussed and recommendations are provided for future studies.
Evaluation of Engagement Among Millennial Consumers with Fashion Brands on Social Media

by

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A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty of North Carolina State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science

Textiles

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DEDICATION

This master thesis is dedicated to my parents, Denise Ann Wiegand and Robert William Wiegand, and our dogs Daisy and Bella. I am very blessed to have the most amazing support system filled with infinite love. Thank you for everything. I love you.
BIOGRAPHY

Julie Wiegand was born in Houston, Texas on January 17, 1985. She moved to Belmont, North Carolina at the age of two where she was raised. She is the daughter of Denise and Robert Wiegand. Julie has one younger sister – Jennifer Perez – and one brother-in-law Jay Perez. Julie graduated from South Point High School in 2003 and continued her education at North Carolina State University with the College of Textiles. She graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Science degree in Textile and Apparel Management with a concentration in Fashion Development and Product Management in May of 2008.

Julie has acquired over five years of retail buying experience; first with Peebles, a former division of Stage Stores Inc. for over four years, and Carter’s/ OshKosh B’gosh for one year. Moving directly into a career of retail buying after graduating with her bachelors’ degree provided Julie with the opportunity to build and develop her skills in buying and merchandising, including collaborating with cross-functional partners, formulating and presenting seasonal business plans to senior management highlighting sales driving strategies, including increasing return on investment and top line sales, managing receipts, and improving turn, sell-thru percent and gross margin goals.

Upon acceptance into the NC State graduate program Julie was awarded a Teaching Assistantship and served as a TA for the duration of her graduate studies under the direction of Dr. Yingjiao Xu. In Spring of 2016 Julie was selected as a student delegate for the program “Doing Business Internationally: Mexico.” This program provides students the opportunity to shadow the business professional, introducing them to the various aspects of international trade by attending trade shows, visiting factories and meeting with trade officials. During the Summer of 2016, Julie was accepted to the Global Textile and Apparel
Industry/ Hong Kong program. This program allows the students to visit textile and apparel companies, cultural sites, and manufacturing plants; along with opportunities to shadow product developers, sourcing managers, designers, and other textile/ apparel industry professionals. These experiences provided an appreciation of international cultural differences in business related and social practices by further expanding their understanding of the textile and apparel industries with companies like American & Efird, Li & Fung, PVH, etc. Also, during the Summer of 2016, Julie interned with Kohl’s as a product development coordinator in the men’s, young men’s, and boy’s furnishings and accessories department. During the internship, Julie had the opportunity to participate in developmental and training classes, run and manage reports, competitive shop, develop innovative and trend-right product, inspect samples, shadow cross functional team members, prepare for and attend collaboration meetings, manage emails, and work collaboratively with cross-functional partners including internal Kohl’s teams and the vendor community.

Julie aspires to be globally competitive graduate with a Master of Science in Textile Technology Management concentrating on Branding and Retail. Exceptional facilities, learning materials, and faculty connection with retail is her primary motivation for seeking a Master of Science degree in Textiles from NC State University. Julie plans to fulfill her academic requirements and graduate in May 2017.
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Conclusively, I would like to thank God our Father and the Lord, my family, friends, and mentors for providing unwavering support and encouragement. I am extremely thankful and blessed for all the wonderful people in my life and would not be where I am today without each one of you.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES ......................................................................................................................... xi

LIST OF FIGURES ......................................................................................................................... xii

1. CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION ................................................................................................. 1
   1.1. Background of the Study ................................................................................................. 1
   1.2. Statement of Purpose ..................................................................................................... 5
   1.3. Research Questions ...................................................................................................... 6
   1.4. Significance of Study ................................................................................................... 7

2. CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE ................................................................................. 9
   2.1. Introduction .................................................................................................................... 9
   2.2. Generation Y Consumers .............................................................................................. 9
      2.2.1. Demographics ........................................................................................................ 10
      2.2.2. Segments ................................................................................................................ 10
      2.2.3. Diversity ................................................................................................................ 11
      2.2.4. Digital Mavens ..................................................................................................... 12
   2.3. The Advent and Evolution of Social Media ................................................................. 13
      2.3.1. Contexts of Social Media ....................................................................................... 14
         2.3.1.1. Collaborative Projects .................................................................................... 15
         2.3.1.2. Content Communities .................................................................................... 16
         2.3.1.3. Social Networking Sites ............................................................................... 19
         2.3.1.4. Blogs ............................................................................................................... 21
   2.4. Dimensions of Consumers’ Brand Engagement ........................................................ 27
      2.4.1. Defining Social Media Engagement .................................................................... 27
2.4.2. Consumers’ Perceptions of Brand Engagement Activities ...........29
  2.4.2.1. Posts .................................................................................31
  2.4.2.2. Contests ..........................................................................31
  2.4.2.3. Crowdsourcing .................................................................32
2.4.3. Consumers’ Brand-Engagement on Social Media .....................33
  2.4.3.1. Consuming ......................................................................34
  2.4.3.2. Contributing ...................................................................35
  2.4.3.3. Creating ..........................................................................35
2.5. Consumers’ Motivations to Engage in Brand-Engagement Activities .......36
  2.5.1. Intrinsic Motivations ..............................................................37
  2.5.2. Extrinsic Motivations .............................................................39
2.6. Linking Fashion Consciousness to Consumer Engagement ..............40
3.  CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY ....................................44
  3.1. Purpose of Study .....................................................................44
  3.2. Research Questions ..................................................................44
  3.3. Research Framework .................................................................45
  3.4. Research Design .....................................................................46
  3.5. Survey Instrument ....................................................................46
    3.5.1. Consumers’ Perceptions of Brand-Engagement Activities ..........47
    3.5.2. Consumers’ Engagement with Fashion Brands on Social Media .......47
      3.5.2.1. Consumers’ Reactive Engagement .........................................48
      3.5.2.2. Consumers’ Proactive Engagement .........................................48
    3.5.3. Consumers’ Motivations to Engage ..........................................48
3.5.3.1. Intrinsic Motivations ........................................................................49
3.5.3.2. Extrinsic Motivations .....................................................................49
3.5.4. Fashion Consciousness ......................................................................50
3.6. Data Analysis .........................................................................................50
4. CHAPTER 4: RESULTS .............................................................................52
4.1. Summary ...............................................................................................52
4.2. Sample Characteristics ..........................................................................52
  4.2.1. Identifying Preferred Fashion Brands ..............................................54
  4.2.2. Fashion Consciousness .....................................................................55
4.3. RQ1: What are young consumers’ general social media behavior? ..........55
  4.3.1. Young Consumers Social Media Usage ............................................55
  4.3.2. Preferred Social Media Platforms ....................................................56
4.4. RQ2: What are young consumers level of engagement with fashion brands on
  social media? ............................................................................................57
  4.4.1. Consumers’ Reactive Engagement ..................................................58
  4.4.2. Consumers’ Proactive Engagement ................................................59
4.5. RQ3: What are young consumers’ motivations to engage with fashion brands
  on social media? ......................................................................................61
  4.5.1. Intrinsic Motivations ......................................................................61
  4.5.2. Extrinsic Motivations .....................................................................62
  4.5.3. Identifying Motivations to Engage ..................................................62
4.6. RQ4: What are young consumers’ perceptions of fashion brands’ engagement
  activities on social media? ......................................................................63
4.7. RQ5: What factors are influencing young consumers to engage with fashion brands on social media? .................................................................64

4.7.1. General Social Media Usage and Engagement on Social Media ..........64
4.7.2. Respondents’ Age and Engagement on Social Media ......................65
4.7.3. Factors Influencing Reactive Engagement on Social Media ..........65
4.7.4. Factors Influencing Proactive Engagement on Social Media ..........66

5. CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS ..................................68

5.1. Overview of the Study ........................................................................68
5.1.1. Young Consumers’ General Social Media Behavior .......................68
5.1.2. Young Consumers’ Levels of Engagement with Fashion Brands on Social Media ..............................................................................69
5.1.3. Motivations for Young Consumers to Engage with Fashion Brands on Social Media ........................................................................70
5.1.4. Young Consumers’ Perceptions of Fashion Brands’ Engagement Activities on Social Media ........................................................................71
5.1.5. Factors Influencing Young Consumers’ Engagement with Fashion Brands on Social Media .................................................................71
5.1.5.1. Reactive Engagement .................................................................72
5.1.5.2. Proactive Engagement .................................................................73
5.2. Implications of the Study ......................................................................74
5.3. Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research ..........78

6. REFERENCES .........................................................................................80

7. APPENDENCES .....................................................................................90
7.1. Appendix A – Survey Instrument ................................................................. 91

7.2. Appendix B – IRB Form for Approval of Surveying ................................. 105
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Multi-Item Scales Reliability Analysis ..........................................................52
Table 2. Sample Characteristics ..............................................................................53
Table 3. Closet Share of Brand X ............................................................................54
Table 4. Consumers’ Brand Loyalty .......................................................................54
Table 5. Degree of Fashion Consciousness in Respondents ...................................55
Table 6. Social Media Usage ..................................................................................55
Table 7. Respondents’ General Social Media Use ..................................................56
Table 8. Social Media Platforms ............................................................................57
Table 9. Forms of Reactive Engagement ................................................................58
Table 10. Reactive Engagement Rating .................................................................59
Table 11. Forms of Proactive Engagement ...............................................................60
Table 12. Proactive Engagement Rating .................................................................60
Table 13. Intrinsic Motivations ................................................................................61
Table 14. Extrinsic Motivations ..............................................................................62
Table 15. Motivations to Engage ..........................................................................63
Table 16. Perceptions of Brand-Engagement Activities on Social Media .............64
Table 17. Relationship between General Social Media Use and Engagement on Social Media ..............................................................................................................65
Table 18. Relationship between Respondents’ Ages and Engagement on Social Media ..........................................................................................................................................................65
Table 19. Relationship between Variables and Reactive Engagement .....................66
Table 20. Relationship between Variables and Proactive Engagement .................67
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Categorization of Social Media Platforms.................................................................26

Figure 2. Research Framework .................................................................................................45
1. CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

The advent of the Internet has fostered the growth of social media platforms, facilitating the strengthening of commercial brands and an increase in consumers’ ability to share and exchange information through online applications. Within this evolving consumer culture are young Millennials, also referred to as Generation Y, who were born between the early 1980s and late 1990s. Currently, they are the largest demographic in the United States, accounting for nearly 80 million consumers, or 28% of the country’s 319 million people (Petro, 2013). Besides the pervasiveness of social media in their lives, the fact that Millennials grew up with technology has made them more globally connected than previous generations. In fact, 87% of them use two to three technological devices at least once daily (Schawbel, 2015). Millennials are therefore often termed “digital natives” because of this exposure to technology throughout their entire lives, a characteristic that is associated with a formidable familiarity with the digital world and has profoundly affected the way this generation lives and works (Bolton et al., 2013). Specifically, Millennials have been known to display a resistance to advertising and marketing efforts as well as a lack of brand loyalty, all of which makes it challenging to identify how to market effectively towards this vastly different generation (Schawbel, 2015).

Working to bridge the marketing gaps associated with the diverse and technologically advanced Millennials, digital connectivity is creating new markets for consumer engagement services. One example of this is social media, which has been defined as “the online means of communication, conveyance, collaboration, and cultivation among interconnected and independent networks of people, communities, and organizations enhanced by technological
capabilities and mobility” (Tuten & Solomon, 2013, p. 4). The growth rate of social media has surpassed all other channels of communication, causing a shift that Tuten and Solomon (2013) describe as a “horizontal revolution…a fundamental change that has transformed the way consumers live, work, and play characterized in part by the prevalence of social media” (p. 4). Social media has thus become integral to marketing, advertising, and consumer engagement. Examples of social media platforms used for involving consumers in brand-engagement activities include collaborative projects, content communities, social networking sites, and blogs (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Moreover, social media has developed into a highly efficient, cost-effective means of consumer-brand engagement (CBE) beyond traditional methods (Erdoğmuş & Çiçek, 2012). Previous empirical studies have discussed the dynamics of consumers’ interactions with CBE activities. Vuori and Okkonen (2012) posit that incorporating motivational factors helps build brand loyalty and enhance consumers’ tendency to engage with a brand. Keller (2013) maintains that a consumer’s willingness to engage with a brand confirms the brand holds the strongest level of loyalty in the person’s mind. However, consumer engagement is a “consumers’ behavioral manifestations that have a brand focus, beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers” (van Doorn et al., 2010, p. 254). That is, consumer engagement is about more than buying the brand’s products. It can take on two forms of interaction behavior: reactive behavior, which includes passive actions like content-consuming, and proactive behavior such as contributing to the creation of online content (Kim & Drumwright, 2016).

In the context of social media, CBE has some nuances to consider. A consumer’s behavioral engagement toward a brand can be thought of as a degree of participation with
external stimuli, such as intentional brand-engagement activities (van Doorn et al., 2010). Such CBE marketing activities on social media are created by brands to provide consumers with a vehicle through which to interact with those brands (Tuten & Solomon, 2013), such as contests, posts, and crowdsourcing. Per Muntinga, Moorman, and Smit’s (2011) study of consumers’ online brand-related activities, the way that consumers engage with a brand on social media can be categorized into three levels of actionable behavior: consuming, contributing, and creating.

Within the frame of reference of social media, motivation is referred to as a persons’ desire to interact with brand-engagement activities on social media (Parker & Wang, 2016). Empirical evidence indicates motivation is an important antecedent to the development of attitudes and behaviors such as trust, engagement (Kim & Drumwright, 2016), and purchasing (Parker & Wang, 2016). Many studies have been conducted on motivational factors that consumers consider and experience while engaging with brands on social media. These studies have identified two types of motivation for consumers’ brand engagement on social media: intrinsic motivations driven by non-tangible, internal reward, and extrinsic motivations driven by external reward (Johnson & Grimm, 2010; Kim & Drumwright, 2016; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Intrinsic motivational factors, such as altruism, self-efficacy, and the enjoyment of helping others (Vuori & Okkonen, 2012), have been found to motivate consumers through strong social incentives (Lee, Kim, & Kim, 2011). Arguably, extrinsic factors are more influential, as they are driven by consumers’ needs to keep up with social media’s popularity and content, stay abreast of a brand’s products and promotions, and communicate with or get support from brands and/or other consumers. However, simply providing consumers with the ability to share and exchange knowledge has already become
an antiquated form of social media marketing (SMM). Instead, brands can foster extrinsic motivation while helping to build brand loyalty and equity by promoting CBE content on social media (Vuori & Okkonen, 2012). It is interesting that Hoffman and Novak (2013) note such external motivation in consumers is driven by internal needs for self-approval, achieving a degree of fashion consciousness, and high self-esteem and social acceptance. Thus, it seems the intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors for CBE on social media are interrelated.

On the topic of fashion consciousness, researchers have examined its importance and how it affects consumers’ consumption behaviors and purchase decisions. *Fashion consciousness*, or consumers’ perceptions of image awareness (Shephard, Pookulangara, Kinley, & Josiam, 2015), increases brand awareness and engagement. Moreover, studies have found that consumers with increased levels of fashion consciousness are more likely to be actively engaged with fashion brands on social media, compared to those who have little to no awareness about fashion (Casidy, 2012). In other words, a fashion-conscious consumer is more likely to rely on getting information about fashion via social media channels (Nam et al., 2007), and therefore tends be more involved in brand-engagement activities on these platforms (Lam & Yee, 2014). Conversely, not only is fashion consciousness affected by social media, but a person’s engagement on social media is also significantly influenced by it. A consumer’s degree of fashion consciousness influences his/her decision to interact with CBE activities on social media, while also impacting the type of social media content they choose to post (Bailey & Seock, 2010; Shephard et al., 2015).

Today’s increasingly digital world and evolving means of communication has changed the nature of fostering consumers’ brand engagement, and this is particularly true
when targeting the Millennial generation—campaigning and in-store human interactions are no longer the top strategies used to engage the Millennial consumer. Instead, marketing to Millennials must involve continuous engagement and the development of one-on-one relationships with this large, unique demographic population. As Schawbel (2015) notes, “62% of Millennials say that if a brand engages with them on social media, they are more likely to become a loyal consumer (p. 2). Additionally, 60% of Millennials reported remaining “often or always loyal to brands that they currently purchase” (Schawbel, 2015, p. 2). Statistics like this indicate that increasing Millennials’ engagement on social media can empower brands. Brands can use SMM to optimize the value of the company on a global stage by growing the pool of potential buyers through social media, as well as by using these platforms to identify optimal markets, branding opportunities, and competitive threats.

1.2. Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to further the understanding of young consumers’ engagement behaviors with fashion brands on social media. Specifically, the current research was conducted to investigate young consumers’ brand engagement behaviors on social media and to identify factors influencing their engagement with fashion brands on social media. Particularly, the influence of the following factors were investigated: motivations to engage with brands on social media, perception of brand’s consumer engagement level, brand loyalty, fashion consciousness, general social media behavior, and consumer demographics. Factors and potential improvements for the engagement activities identified by this study may help the industry build and strengthen co-collaborative and personalized marketing programs focused on the consumer.
This study began by investigating young consumers’ general social media behavior. Next, young consumers’ motivations to engage with brands were defined and explored, particularly their intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Considering that a young consumer’s perception of a brand’s engagement activities could influence his/her participation (de Vries & Carlson, 2014), this study also examined their views about CBE activities on social media compared to their levels of engagement with these activities. Finally, the current research looked at various factors that may influence young consumers’ engagement behaviors with fashion brands on social media, including their degree of fashion consciousness, brand loyalty, and consumer demographics.

1.3. Research Questions

The following research questions were developed to guide the current study’s investigation of young consumers’ brand engagement behavior on social media:

1. What are young consumers’ general social media behavior?
2. What are young consumers’ level of engagement with fashion brands on social media?
3. What are young consumers’ motivations to engage with fashion brands on social media?
4. What are young consumers’ perceptions of fashion brands’ consumer engagement activities on social media?
5. What factors are influencing young consumers to engage with fashion brands on social media?
1.4. Significance of the Study

Brands that wish to succeed today are being forced to address seismic shifts in the consumer landscape and competitive marketplaces. One way to do so is by creating and establishing positive consumer engagement activities on social media platforms, which has become a notably complex paradigm. Young consumers, characterized by the industry as digital mavens, require continuous engagement and the fostering of one-on-one relationships with brands to keep them aware, interested, and loyal (Bolton et al., 2013). This group was the focused segment of the current research.

Kim and Drumwright (2016) found that the “more self-determined a person’s motivation to engage in a behavior or act is, the more positive the outcomes will be that result from that behavior or action and can influence an individual’s decision to participate in a brand’s activity” (p. 971). Motivation has been found to be a vital an important precursor to developing attitudinal and behavioral consequences such as trust and engagement behaviors (Kim & Drumwright, 2016), as well as behaviors related to purchasing (Parker & Wang, 2016). As we know that SMM for modern consumers requires more than just giving them the ability to share and exchange knowledge about a brand, then, it is important to consider how to motivate young consumers to increase their engagement with brands. Fashion consciousness positively affects consumers’ consumption behavior and purchase decisions overall, and as such, can arguably likewise impact their levels of engagement with fashion brands on social media (Casidy, 2012).

Social media is a global phenomenon that has evolved the forms of interaction and instruments of communication with its users. In its wake, engaging with consumers has become an entirely new paradigm for brands. Thus, it is vital for brands to proactively
embrace this shift by advocating CBE via advanced, dynamic methods of communication involving co-collaborative relationships with consumers. Understanding young consumers’ general engagement behaviors, perceptions of and levels of engagement with brand-related content, and motivational factors for engaging with fashion brands on social media can shed some needed light on this issue. Influential factors and potential improvements identified in the study may help the industry build and strengthen collaborative personalized marketing programs for the Millennial consumer.
2. CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Introduction

Preceding research regarding behavioral theories of consumer-brand engagement on social media are reviewed in the following literature review. The purpose of the literature review is to provide a summary of general social media behavior, engagement behavior, motivational factors, and fashion consciousness. The literature review synthesizes the current literature regarding social media use among Millennial consumers with fashion brands.

2.2. Generation Y Consumers

Social class and geography are categories often wrongfully used to define a cohort. Bolton, Parasuraman, Hoefnagels, Mighels, Kabadayi, Gruber, Yuliya, Solnet (2013) conceptualize a cohort as a generational group who are born within a defined set of years; whom share historical and social life experiences, and interests. Previous studies of cognitive, emotional, and social traits of Generation Y consumers often reveal contradictory findings (Bolton et al., 2013; Schwabel, 2015). For example, Millennials are perceived as being profoundly reliant on social media for peer-to-peer/communal interaction and emotional regulation (Bolton et al., 2013). Furthermore, Millennials are described as narcissistic, pretentious, and cultivators in the devaluation of hard work and work ethics (Bolton et al., 2013). These characteristics have been found to be more prevalent in Millennials than any other generation. Contradictorily, David Arabov, CEO and co-founder of Elite Daily, described Millennials as being “highly educated, career-driven, politically progressive and have the tendency to develop strong brand loyalty when presented with quality products and actively engaged by brands” (Schwabel, 2015, p. 1). Complications on
engaging with the Millennial consumer have emerged from the disagreement on how to characterize them (Bolton et al., 2013; Schwabel, 2015).

2.2.1. Demographics

Millennials, born between the years 1981 and 2000, are currently the largest demographic in the U.S., accounting for almost 80 million consumers and comprising of 28% of the 319 million people living in the country (For Athletic Wear Vendors, 2016). The size of this generation is due in large part to the size of their parent’s Baby Boomer Generation. Most Millennials live with their parents, which provides this demographic with significantly more disposable income, allowing for almost $200 billion in annual purchasing power (For Athletic Wear Vendors, 2016). However, many Millennials own a significant amount of student loan debt and struggle with unemployment. A relatively new trend, in U.S. demographics, is the emergence of households headed by consumers 35 years of age and younger. Currently, this age group makes up more than 26 million diversified households in the U.S. market and will have a major impact on the future of marketing (Francese, 2008).

2.2.2. Segments

Due to the vast diversity encompassing the Millennial generation, it is often classified into two different segments, young Millennials (ages 18 to mid-twenties) and old Millennials (ages 25 to mid-thirties). Kevin Murnane with Forbes (2016), noted that 37% of older Millennials reported that they often post about every aspect in their life on social media and therefore, require less of a need to have in-person social interaction. Conversely, only 20% of younger Millennials reported to have the same feeling (Murnane, 2016).

A significant factor that has divided the two different cohorts in the Millennial generation is economic status. Financial status is a factor that defines and differentiates the
Millennial generation which can be problematic when engaging this consumer. The older Millennials have secure jobs and salaries, and tend to be more self-aware. Contrariwise, the younger generation are still amid completing their education with part-time jobs and limited income. If a brand decides to split the Millennial generation into two separate cohorts, a clearly defined and over-arching messaging strategy will need to be executed properly. However, due to financial status being the only impactful difference in the Millennial generation, splitting the Millennials into two different cohorts is not recommended, for this will change as this diverse generation continues to mature.

2.2.3. Diversity

The Millennials are a blended generation consisting of a large population of immigrants making it one of the most diverse cohorts. In 2008, it was reported that 40% of the U.S. population growth consisted of immigrants (Francese, 2008). A major factor that differentiates this generation from the other generations is that two in five consumers are Hispanic, African-American, or Asian, in comparison to the Baby Boomer generation where only one in five have the same characteristic (Francese, 2008).

Generation Y is a globally connected cohort comprised of highly educated young adults. This generation has built dynamic and diverse family units, has acquired substantial amounts of debt, and has developed increased levels of environmental awareness (Francese, 2008). The U.S. consumer market continues to become a melting pot of age, race/ethnicity, and gender, posing as a challenging endeavor for the marketing industry. Previous studies have shown that traditional engagement marketing typically lacks differentiation targeting the diverse segments of the Millennial generation (Erdoğan & Çiçek, 2012, p. 1355). To
garner and maintain consumer engagement within this digitally enhanced generation, brands should utilize social networking platforms to diversify their engaging activity practices.

2.2.4. Digital Mavens

Due to the constant exposure to digital technology throughout their entire lives, Millennials have been distinguished as digital mavens (Bolton et al., 2013, p. 247). This characteristic is defined by the formidable exposure to the digital world and has profoundly affected the way Millennials live and work (Bolton et al., 2013, p. 247).

Extensive research has been further conducted on the premise of Millennials having the predisposition for being market mavens (Taken Smith, 2012, p. 86). Taken Smith (2012) defines market mavens as “consumers with general product knowledge acting as disseminators of product information” (p. 86). Millennials often research and participate in online product reviews. This participation has given Millennials a high level of authority and, therefore, Millennials are often regarded as valuable resources of information by their peers. Additionally, 43% of Millennials rank authenticity over content when consuming news (Schawbel, 2015). Millennials view content as more authentic and valuable when it comes from a trusting source such as a peer, blogger or another consumer, compared to coming from a manufacturer or a brand (Schawbel, 2015).

Identifying how to market towards this vastly different generation is challenging because of their resistance to advertising, ineffective marketing efforts, and lack of brand loyalty (Schawbel, 2015). Despite these challenges, the impact that Generation Y has on the U.S. market, due to its size and spending power, is substantial and attractive. This cohort is a lucrative segment and it is critical for fashion brands to optimize the intersection between two Millennial age groups (Francese, 2008). Digital connectivity is creating new markets for
consumer engagement services that will bridge the marketing gaps associated with the diverse and technologically advanced Millennial generation.

2.3. The Advent and Evolution of Social Media

The growth rate of social media has superseded all channels of communication. In 38 years for radio and 13 years for television, 50 million users were reached and connected through these two forms of communication. In contrast, the Internet took only four years to reach 50 million consumers and, in less than nine months Facebook had connected with 100 million members (Tuten & Solomon, 2013). Tuten and Solomon (2013) describes this shift in communication as a ‘horizontal revolution,’ defined as “a fundamental change that has changed the way we live, work, and play characterized in part by the prevalence of social media” (p. 4).

Web 2.0, Social Media, and User Generated Content (UGC) are instrumental terms used within the frame of reference of ‘social networking’ utilized to engage with consumers (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) define Web 2.0 as a “platform whereby content and application are no longer created and published by individuals, instead continuously modified by all users in a participatory and collaborative fashion” (p. 61). Therefore, the technology of Web 2.0 allows for the creation of social media platforms that facilitates interactivity (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

User Generated Content (UGC) is the means of which consumers communicate with each other, through social media, by the creation and publication of media content created by those consumers (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Smith, Fischer, & Yongjian, 2012; Tuten & Solomon, 2013). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) argue that for media content to be classified as UGC it needs to fulfill three basic requirements identified as web accessibility, uniqueness,
and non-professional created content. Per Smith et al. (2012) UGC can be prompted by a brand or voluntarily contributed by the consumer, and produced individually or collaboratively. UGC guides marketing programs to become consumer driven and is what sets apart social media from becoming platforms exclusive to a brand’s digital marketing campaign (Smith et al., 2012).

Social media is a global phenomenon that has evolved the forms of interaction and instruments of communication with its users. The terms ‘social media’ and ‘social network sites’ are often used interchangeably. Social media is a “group of internet-based applications that allows for the communication, conveyance, collaboration, and cultivation among interconnected and independent networks of people, communities, brands, and organizations enhanced by the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0” (Tuten & Solomon, 2013, p.4, Kaplan & Haenlein 2010, p. 61). Collaborative projects, content communities, social networking sites (SNS), and blogs are different types social media platforms utilized for consumers to engage in brand-engagement activities (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) describe each of the concepts as having different functions and additionally, identifies them as having similar applications used to create social content. The following section will define these terms and provide insight into the functions each concept provides.

2.3.1. Contexts of Social Media

Each individual social media platform provides consumers and brands with distinctive architecture and authentic character specifically designed for various social needs (Smith et al., 2012). These platforms provide the means to interact and produce UGC, with each platform offering different formats with varying degrees of content richness (Kaplan &
Social media can have negative impacts such as “contradicting messages across multiple channels, and production of ambiguous and negative content” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 65). However, it can be a highly efficient and cost-effective source of consumer-brand engagement beyond traditional methods (Erdoğmuş & Çiček, 2012). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) identify four types of social media channels: collaborative projects, content communities, social networking sites, and blogs. Each platform offers different types of media categorized by their characteristics.

2.3.1.1. Collaborative Projects

Collaborative projects are comprised of democratic manifestations of UGC that enable cross-functional team members (i.e. brands and their consumers) to master complex projects (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The most common form of collaborative projects on social media are ‘wikis’ and ‘social bookmarking applications.’ Wikis are “websites that allow any internet user to add, delete, or revise content” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 64). Wikipedia is an example of a web-based project containing collaboratively (cross-functional) written projects by anonymous contributors on the Internet (Wikipedia.org, n.d.).

Social bookmarking is an application technology that allows users to collect and share their media content on various websites (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Pinterest is a form of social bookmarking that catalogs and recommends a user’s ideas and passions for other Pinterest members to view and share (about.pinterest.com, n.d.). According to Pew Research Center (2015), women make up the majority of Pinterest members representing 42% of online users compared to 13% of online men. Additionally, 37% of users on Pinterest are Millennials. Fashion brands utilize Pinterest to extend their consumer-base reach. Brands on Pinterest can create specific boards, and post inspirational quotes and lifestyle tips to invite
consumers to connect by viewing and sharing their content. These boards provide a connection to a brand’s homepage by providing consumers with a direct link to purchase. Pinterest eliminates the use of hard-selling tactics enabling brands to reach the heart of consumers and develop a friendship with them allowing for brands and consumers to share content in the form of ideas and passions (about.pinterest.com, n.d.).

2.3.1.2. Content Communities

Content communities are designed for brands and consumers to share media content, such as images and videos, through ‘live-streaming’ (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Live-streaming is a form of technology that “transmits or receives live video and audio coverage over the Internet” (oxforddictionaries.com, n.d.). “Content communities pose a risk to brands due to the sharing of copyright-protected material” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 63). Some examples of content community platforms include YouTube, Snapchat, Periscope, and Vine.

YouTube is a free video sharing website. On a daily basis, approximately hundreds of millions of hours of content is watched on YouTube, equating to over billions of views (youtube.com, n.d.). In 2009, YouTube was a desired platform of online advertising and engagement for the Millennial consumer, with 53% of Millennials expressing their appeal towards YouTube. However, more recent studies reflect that this appeal has dropped to 39% and continues to drop year after year (Taken Smith, 2012). Tsimonis and Dimitriadis (2014) stated that YouTube was the second most popular social media platform for brands, with 79% of Fortune 100 Best Companies actively using the platform. French Connection, a global fashion retailer, established its own YouTube channel called YouTique, which creates short videos offering fashion advice to its viewers (Tuten & Solomon, 2013). Chanel is also a great example of a brand that is leveraging live-streaming as an interactive engagement tool.
As one of the top brand fashion channels followed on YouTube, Chanel has over 350 thousand subscribers and 140 million video views (Blattberg, 2014). The luxury brand’s YouTube channel offers consumers the opportunity to live-stream their fashion shows and learn about the brand’s history through a video series.

Snapchat is an image sharing platform that allows a brand to tell their story and define their brand through video advertising. More than 60% of U.S. 13 to 34-year-old smartphone users are on Snapchat (Snapchat, 2014). Additionally, there are over 10 million videos viewed daily and over 100 million active daily Snapchatters (Snapchat.com, n.d.). Approximately 70% of college students post and/or visit Snapchat at least once a day, in contrast, only 11% of the same age cohort reported posting to Facebook once a day (Snapchat, 2014). Trailing Facebook (at 75.6%) and Instagram (at 43.1%), Snapchat is the third most popular social app, at a 32.9% penetration on mobile devices among Millennials (Snapchat, 2014). Snapchat is unique in that it does not allow for the constant stream of irrelevant marketing from brands, making this social channel appealing to the Millennial users. This appeal is forcing brands to focus on what Millennial consumers care about and are attracted to in order to maximize their marketing efforts through engagement.

Periscope is a live video-streaming application that bridges the gap between Twitter and YouTube. YouTube is a passive platform limiting viewers to simply watch and/or upload previously recorded videos, while Twitter allows the user to read about events but does not offer the access to live video content. Periscope provides an active experience enabling users with the ability to broadcast in real-time and comment on the videos (Shontell, 2015). In 2016, Burberry announced its premier on Periscope broadcasting a live runway show. Burberry’s collaboration with Periscope provided fans with an ‘all-access’ pass behind the
scenes and a front-row seat to the luxury brand’s fashion shows (burberryplc.com, 2015). Additionally, this collaboration allowed followers of the luxury brand to communicate live with each other during the shows. The luxury brand has also incorporated a direct-to-consumer e-commerce link making the line available for immediate purchase to consumers (burberryplc.com, 2015).

Vine is an online application that allows users to create and upload six-seconds time frame videos. Approximately 50% of Vine users are Millennials with more than 28% of those users being younger Millennials between the ages of 18-24 (statista.com, 2015). Features that make Vine unique from other content communities include not only the ability to record a video on the platforms app, a feature also offered on other content community apps; but additionally, includes the ability to import videos from the phone. Vine is a relatively new media tool for the fashion industry. Fashion brands and retailers active on Vine include, and are not limited to, French Connection, Nordstrom, and Burberry (Arthur, 2013). The most popular uses of Vine for fashion brands include short video clips utilizing stop motion art to showcase product, provide a behind the scenes glimpse of the brand, and ‘how-to’ videos (Arthur, 2013). French Connection got creative by producing a stop motion art video clip of a suitcase being packed with brand’s latest collection. Burberry has used the app to showcase product details such as print and pattern, and uses the app to post clips of celebrities present at their fashion shows. Nordstrom created unique videos to attract consumers including, utilizing a flying shirt as a guide that directed viewers on a magical tour through their store, as well as a tutorial on how to tie a tie (Arthur, 2013). Viewers can like, share, and comment on Vine videos across multiple media channels including Twitter, Facebook.
Per L2 Think Tank and Pixability (a YouTube marketing platform), approximately 90% of fashion brands have a presence on a live-streaming site but only a few produce a high level of active content (Blattberg, 2014). This form of content can also be shared on social networking sites such as Facebook. Consumers join these brand communities to create brand-related video content, watch video series posted by the brand, and watch fashion shows live.

2.3.1.3. Social Networking Sites

The advent of the Internet has fostered the growth of social networking platforms further facilitating brands and consumers’ ability to share and exchange information and visuals through online consumer applications. Social networking sites are social media “applications that enable users to connect by creating personal information profiles, inviting friends and colleagues to access these profiles, and by sending e-mails or instant messages to one other” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 63). Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn are examples of social networking sites.

As of March 2016, Facebook reported over one billion daily active users sharing more than two billion pieces of content each day (newsroom.fb.com, 2016; Tuten & Solomon, 2013). According to Pew Research Center (2015), 71% of adult American internet users are on Facebook, with more than 80% consisting of Millennial consumers making it the largest generation cohort to be active on Facebook (Duggan, Ellison, Lampe, Lenhart, & Madden, 2015). Per L2 Think Tank (2015), between 2011 and 2014, approximately three million U.S. teen Millennials abandoned Facebook for Instagram as their main social media platform. This decrease is due to the activity on Facebook of parents and grandparents of these younger Millennials. However, Facebook falls into third place for the Fortune 100 Best Companies with only 74% of these companies having an active brand page. These
companies’ brand pages have an average of 152 thousand members per brand page and only about six-thousands of these members are actively engaging with these brands (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014). Anyone can become an active engager on Facebook by posting secondary content, updating personal status, and providing recommendations and reviews on products, services, and posts from other users (Tuten & Solomon, 2013). Understanding where the future of Facebook is and its importance with Millennials is crucial. Facebook can no longer rely on winning new users; managing to keep the younger users engaged is the new challenge.

Instagram is a social networking service providing digital photo and video sharing among its users and has more than 300 million users with more than 60 million photos shared globally daily (Instagram.com, 2016). The Millennial generation represents 53% of active users making it the largest generation cohort active on Instagram (Duggan et al., 2015). Brands are becoming more involved on Instagram by actively participating with live hashtags (#) used to categorize content, which is created and linked to photography posted, that is relatable to consumers (Tuten & Solomon, 2013). Young Millennials favor Instagram and Snapchat as their preferred social media platforms over Facebook (Duggan et al., 2015). These young Millennials enjoy sharing their personal stories on these social channels and are attracted by their increased levels of privacy by not being required to create a personal profile page.

LinkedIn is a professional network platform available in 24 languages in over 200 countries and territories (press.linkedin.com, n.d.). It is the largest professional network with over 450 million members, consisting of 40 million Millennials (press.linkedin.com, n.d.). Conventional recruiting strategies, such as job boards and career fairs, are becoming less
successful due to a decreasing interest from the digital maven Millennials and the limitation of qualified individuals (Madia, 2011). Utilizing social media platforms, such as LinkedIn, to network and recruit, both companies and job seekers need to ensure they have a strong and favorable presence online (Madia, 2011). To leverage market share and remain competitive, companies continue to increase recruitment strategies on social media platforms. Other benefits of recruiting online include cost-effectiveness, time-efficiency, and access to a larger demographic of qualified applicants (Madia, 2011).

2.3.1.4. Blogs

Blogs are online news sources or digital magazines that posts regularly updated content in chronological order. This content can be in the form of texts, visuals including graphics and videos, and audio (Tuten & Solomon, 2013; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). A popular blog term used in the context of the fashion industry is ‘spokesblogging.’ A spokesblogger is often paid to endorse certain brand products and/or services (Tuten & Solomon, 2013). Their main objective is to contribute to their blog by posting entertaining and/or educational content. Blogs can be produced either individually or collaboratively. There are two types of blogs in existence: blogs and microblogs. Blogs are owned media content built from online blog platforms that offer a limitless amount of space to publish content (Tuten & Solomon, 2013). WordPress, Medium, Mashable, and Squarespace are examples of popular blog sites utilized today. Microblogs are different from blogs in that they are social media platforms that enable the capability of blogging with limited length of content posted (Tuten & Solomon, 2013). Popular microblogs utilized are Twitter and Tumblr.
Twitter is a social media platform, in the form of micro-blogging, that enables members to create and share ideas and information via ‘tweets.’ Twitter allows a maximum of 140 characters per tweet (about.twitter.com, 2016). Today, Twitter has more than five thousand tweets happening every second (Tuten & Solomon, 2013). According to Pew Research Center (2015), Millennials make up the largest generation of active users at 37%. Furthermore, 82% of the Fortune 100 Best Companies have an active Twitter account, making Twitter the most popular blog platform for these companies (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014). Twitter appears to be experiencing a decrease in Millennial interests due to the emergence of other blogging sites that offer flexibility and customization. Millennials rely on Twitter to banish boredom, enhance live experiences, and to tell their own stories (blog.twitter.com, 2014). Nevertheless, as other blog sites continue to offer extensive creativity tools Millennials begin to look to these other sites for inspiration and creativity.

Tumblr, a microblog platform, has over 316 million blogs with more than 140 billion posts (tumblr.com, 2016). Tumblr, comparable to Twitter, is also limited in the length of content that can be posted. Unlike Twitter, Tumblr offers customization through colors and themes as well as a unique tool that offers sponsored brand posts. Sponsored brand posts are available in three options including sponsored posts, sponsored video posts, and sponsored days which, are based on the content and the amount of time and desired duration a brand wishes to post this content of Tumblr’s dashboard. Tumblr’s dashboard allows for viewers to have full access to the brand’s content. Brands can pin their logos or taglines linking them to an exclusive page that contains brand-created content. Content of the posts include stories, photos, videos, and activities that the brand has created. An example of a brand utilizing Tumblr is Nike. Nike launched an empowerment campaign called ‘Better For It’ inspiring
women to be “active, taking on new challenges and conquering personal goals” (news.nike.com, 2015). Nike bought a ‘sponsored day’ to reach out and inform viewers of their new on-going campaign. Tumblr offers Nike a way encourage engagement through interactivity with its viewers, allowing them to post, share, comment, view the blog including the hashtag #betterforit.

WordPress is a self-hosting blogging tool available through the installation of WordPress software or through the online service of WordPress.com (wordpress.org, n.d.). Unique customization tools that WordPress offers are themed pages, the installation option of widgets (viewable and/ downloadable apps), and plugins (“clickable icons that enable the viewer to bookmark or share the page on other social media sites”) (Tuten & Solomon, 2013, p. 188). As of 2016, WordPress supports more than 60 million websites and is used by more than 26% of the top 10 million websites globally (wordpress.org, 2016). WordPress has evolved from a simplistic blog site to a full content managing tool used for customization with limitless creation and content length (wordpress.org, n.d.).

Medium is a social publishing blog platform created for story-telling and the sharing of perspectives (about.medium.com, n.d.). As of 2015, over 300,000 people had published their stories on Medium (Hof, 2015). Medium’s purpose is conducive to a brand in that it offers alignment with leading industry writers and thinkers, built-in distribution, and aesthetic simplicity (about.medium.com, n.d.). Medium provides built-in distribution allowing for interaction of posted content in which readers and writers can evolve ideas by commenting on publications, highlighting key ideas allowing other readers to resonate and interpret those ideas differently, and offering a simplistic strategy by providing a standardized template ensuring the published content is aesthetically appealing. Brands can
use Medium as a channel product or campaign announcements, share brand stories, combat issues of false publications and mitigate problems that brand has experienced by publishing articles telling their side of the story (brands.medium.com, n.d.).

Mashable is a multi-media blog company that allows users and hired staff to publish articles relating to technical and digital content and digital culture to promote brands and start-ups, and products centered around technology. Mashable has an average of 45 million unique visitors with over seven million shares, and 28 million social media followers (mashable.com, n.d.). BrandLab, created by Mashable, has been developed to “help brands become content creators to amplify their social media assets by sharing published work, commenting on industry developments, and discussing trends” (mashable.com, n.d.). A leading resource in technology, Mashable provides access to consumers on leading industry trends and innovations allowing the consumer to review, share, and comment on featured publications as well as producing their own publications.

Squarespace is a blog platform that enables the creation of impactful, stylish, and manageable websites; empowering brands and individuals to share their stories and create an impactful, stylish, and easy-to-manage online presence (squarespace.com, n.d.). The blog interface allows its members to utilize the platform as a tool for customization with limitless creation and content length. The social platform also provides flexibility by giving consumers the option to create a simple landing page, develop a blog, or build an e-commerce site for their business (squarespace.com, n.d.).

Fashion brands often create their own blogs on their own websites. Tory Burch’s blog, called the Tory Daily, offers not only insight into the inspiration for her latest collections, but also provides tips on entrepreneurship, beauty, culture, travel, and
entertainment (toryburch.com, 2016). The goal of her blog is to separate herself from other fashion brands by becoming a lifestyle brand (Tuten & Solomon, 2013).

Figure 1 illustrates the categorization of social media platforms utilized in the social media marketing (SMM) field based on the literature reviewed. Each platform offers their “own unique architecture, culture and norms” (Smith et al., 2012, p.104). These platforms elicit various levels of engagement providing consumers the means to interact and produce UGC, with each platform offering different formats with varying degrees of content richness (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).
Figure 1. Categorization of Social Media Platforms
2.4. Dimensions of Consumers’ Brand Engagement

Hollebeek, Glynn, & Brodie (2014) define consumer-brand engagement (CBE) as a “consumers’ positively balanced brand-related cognitive, emotional and behavioral activity during or related to focal consumer/brand interactions” (p. 149). This definition conceptualizes engagement as being multi-dimensional: personal (cognitive reasoning), emotional (social context), and behavioral (action oriented) (Hollebeek et al., 2014). Previous empirical studies of CBE have discussed the dynamics of consumers’ interactions with brand-engagement activities. Within the framework of social media, a consumers’ behavioral engagement toward a brand can be conceptualized as a consequence (degree of participation) to external stimuli, such as brand-engagement activities (van Doorn, Lemon, Mittal, Nass, Pick, Priner, & Verhoef, 2010). Schawbel’s research (2015) stated that “62% of Millennials say that if a brand engages with them on social media they are more likely to become a loyal consumer” (p. 2). Engagement is a behavior-based factor, meaning it is influential with online brand experience and the consumers’ behavioral outcomes, such as the degree of brand loyalty and level of satisfaction (Hollebeek et al., 2014).

2.4.1. Defining Social Media Engagement

To engage, in the context of a verb, can imply several types of action. Oxford Dictionary (n.d.) defines engage as to “occupy or attract someone’s interest or attention, to participate or become involved in, and/or establish a meaningful contact or connection.”

Engagement can take on many forms from both the consumer and brand perspectives. Within the framework of social media, Mollen and Wilson (2010) define engagement as the “cognitive and affective commitment to an active relationship with the brand as personified by the website or other computer-mediated entities designed to communicate brand value”
Brands interacting on social media establishes brand resonance which adds value to their product offering. Muntinga, Moorman, and Smit (2011) conceptualize these engagement activities as ‘consumers’ online brand-related activities’ (COBRA’s) (i.e. brand-engagement activities). These forms of interactive communication and the content generated are relatively new to the marketing industry and can be identified as electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) (Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, & Gremler, 2004). eWOM can be defined as “any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former consumers about a product, service, or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet” (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004, p.39). To provide clarification, Muntinga et al. (2011) differentiated UGC from eWOM by identifying that UGC content is produced and uploaded by consumers only and never includes information produced by companies. COBRAs are characterized as eWOM generated content. Additionally, content generated by consumers, in response to COBRAs, is characterized as UGC (Muntinga et al., 2011). As discussed earlier, Smith et al. (2012) identified that UGC can be prompted by a brand or voluntarily contributed by the consumer, produced individually or collaboratively, and consist of various formations such as Facebook ‘posts’ or ‘status,’ Twitter ‘tweets,’ and YouTube ‘video uploads.’

Creating and establishing positive consumer engagement is a complex paradigm. This is in part due to the seismic shifts brands are experiencing in the marketing environment with the dramatic rise in SMM. Research conducted by Razorfish found that 40% of consumers on social media have at least ‘friended’ a brand on social media (Tuten & Solomon, 2013). To friend, follow, or like a brand’s social media page represent some of the lowest levels of consumers’ proactive engagement on social media (Tuten & Solomon, 2013). Digital
connectivity is creating new markets for consumer-brand engagement services, fostering user-centered communication that will continue to grow and advance. It is essential for brands to utilize SMM properly to leverage consumer engagement and enhance their relationships with the brands (de Vries & Carlson, 2014). A disconnected value chain that functions in silos and relies on inefficient processes, such as traditional data sharing, fails to extend a social presence, making interactive engagement non-existent and/difficult to participate in. This, in turn, can have a negative impact on consumers’ perceptions of the brand and its engagement activities on social media. Brands are taking a proactive approach to moving away from linear value chains and instead are restructuring themselves as advocates of consumer engagement with advanced and dynamic methods of communication involving collaborative relationships with consumers.

2.4.2. Consumers’ Perceptions of Brand Engagement Activities

Brand resonance reflects the “ultimate relationship and highest level of identification that a consumer has with a brand” (Keller, 2013, p. 92). Vuori and Okkonen (2012) posit that fostering motivational factors to enhance consumers’ engagement with brand-engagement activities helps to build brand loyalty. Furthermore, Keller (2013) identified that when consumers are engaged with a brand, this willingness to engage confirms that the brand holds the strongest level of brand loyalty in that consumers’ mind. Research conducted by Erdoğan and Çiček (2012) reveals that engaging consumers on social media provides companies with cost-effective way to network, converse, and build communities with consumers to “increase brand-awareness, boost brand-recognition and recall, and in turn, building and increasing brand loyalty” (p. 1355). SMM is an interdisciplinary and cross-functional concept of Internet marketing that utilizes social networking websites as a
marketing tool (Felix, Rauschnabel, & Hinsch, 2016). The goal of SMM is to produce content that will inspire consumers to engage with brands on social media platforms to help a company increase brand exposure and broaden consumer reach (Tuten & Solomon, 2013).

SMM activities are marketing actions produced by brands to provide consumers with a vehicle to interact and engage with those brands (Tuten & Solomon, 2013). Brands use these ‘activities’ as a strategy to incorporate social media as a marketing tool (Tuten & Solomon, 2013). Additionally, these brand-engagement activities allow brands to build online communities of brand ambassadors, promote products and services, and provide instant support through real time communication (Erdoğan & Çiçek, 2012). Per Yes Lifecycle marketing, 86% of apparel brands are active on four or more social media websites and 60% are active on five or more social media websites (Loechner, 2015).

According to the de Vries and Carlson (2014) study, a consumer’s perception of a brand’s activities could influence their participation. The de Vries and Carlson study (2014) discusses consumer engagement behavior and how it is largely influenced based on consumers’ interaction with the brand. Specifically, de Vries and Carlson (2014) revealed that the more engaged a brand is with a consumer the more involved a consumer is with the brand. This leads to a higher probability that the consumer will demonstrate increased levels of exploratory (engaging) behaviors (de Vries & Carlson, 2014). O’Cass and Ngo (2011) validated this concept, revealing from their study that the value of a brand’s co-creation activity that is offered is positively correlated with the consumers’ decision to engage with the brand-engagement activities. Brand-engagement activities, such as posts, contests, and crowdsourcing, can act as mechanisms for encouraging consumer engagement, further cultivating a valuable consumer-brand relationship (de Vries & Carlson, 2014).
2.4.2.1. Posts

A post is a form of communication characterized as comments and responses, information updates, photos and visual uploads, and other various material (de Vries, Gensler, & Leeflang, 2012). A post is a marginal and a relatively small portion of the potential activity that could be happening on a brand’s social media page (de Vries et al., 2012). de Vries et al. (2012) research focused on the effectiveness of brand posts which revealed that the more vivid and interactive a brand’s post is, the number of visitors to the brand page will be higher, and therefore, the amount of comments and/or likes in response to the brand’s post will also be higher. Brands can harness the power of UGC by providing the ability for consumers to post their experiences on the brand’s social media page. This type of activity builds brand fans who are more emotionally attached and devoted to the brand; and in turn, generating more positive electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), producing higher engagement intentions and purchase intentions (de Vries et al., 2012). Brands hope that by providing a space for consumers to post their opinions freely that this will result in higher levels of future engagement (Tuten & Solomon, 2013).

2.4.2.2. Contests

Contests can be highly effective and interactive forms of engagement that generate brand awareness (Tuten & Solomon, 2013). Successful contests appeal to the lifestyle and interests of the brands target market generating a high level of interest. Ultimately, this attention to detail becomes a motivational driver for consumers to participate. Brands can create contests with minimal effort and outgoing expenditures. Examples of these contests include re-tweet to win and post a picture of a favorite in-store shopping experience or using a brand’s products. Another example of a contest includes encouraging the consumer to tell
the brand their favorite thing about that brand with the possibility of winning a grand prize. Gift cards, member loyalty rewards, coupons, cash prizes, or donations to any charity of the consumers’ choice can be types of grand prizes rewarded by brands.

In 2014, Cole Haan hosted a UGC contest on Pinterest called ‘Wandering Sole.’ The fashion brand asked their Pinterest followers to pin photos of their favorite Cole Haan footwear in their favorite places to ‘wander’ using the hashtag #WanderingSole (Tuten & Solomon, 2013). A grand prize of a $1,000 shopping spree was awarded to the most creative pin (ftc.gov, 2014). The goal of the contest was to create an activity that would endorse Cole Haan’s latest collection through social media and their followers to increase the brand’s exposure and broaden their consumer reach (Tuten & Solomon, 2013).

2.4.2.3. Crowdsourcing

Crowdsourcing is a brand-engagement activity that can increase the brand’s exposure and broaden their consumer reach. Crowdsourcing “describes a process that harnesses the collective knowledge of a large group of people to solve problems and complete tasks” (Tuten & Solomon, 2013, p. 13). Initially, crowdsourcing was utilized by start-up companies to appeal to consumers in order to establish sales and growth. Today, social media has adopted crowdsourcing as an engaging activity for startup brands, established brands, and everything in between. It is common for brands to collaborate with consumers to co-create branded product or services, and to combat issues and/or problem solve. The idea behind ‘crowdsourcing’ is to leverage consumers’ creativity by encouraging them to create and post their own videos on social media, which can then be voted on by the public and/or the brand.

Timberland, an outdoor retailer, whose product is designed for both the outdoor and urban lifestyles, is utilizing crowdsourcing to their full potential. In early 2016, the retailer
asked consumers to assist in the promotion of a new collection called ‘Craftletics.’ The promotion asked consumers to design hiking-sneaker boots with the top designs going into production and sales as part of the ‘Craftletics’ collection (Binkley, 2016). Timberland took this one step further by utilizing ‘crowdfunding’ to select the winners. Crowdfunding is a relatively new term and process in the industry, conceptualized from crowdsourcing. Crowdfunding is the process from which brands ask consumers to place an order from a prototype or sketch before the item is produced (Binkley, 2016). Timberland chose the winning designs based upon the amount of initial orders placed by consumers. Gaining consumers awareness, through crowdsourcing, is an effective way to incite consumer-brand engagement.

2.4.3. Consumers’ Brand-Engagement on Social Media

Consumer engagement can be conceptualized as a “consumers’ behavioral manifestations that have a brand focus, beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers” (van Doorn, et al., 2010, p. 254). Social media is a public forum that fosters strength in numbers and allows for like-minded individuals to band together and voice their opinions. It is important for consumers to engage on social media because this interaction allows consumers to communicate with brands, in real-time, building trust and loyalty (Keller, 2013). Consumers can express their needs and feelings of concern or excitement with a brand, which can influence the way the brand operates. Common levels of interaction include meeting like-minded others and exchanging information about products or services with other consumers (Godey, Manthiou, Pederzoli, Rokka, Aiello, Donvito, & Singh, 2016). Approximately 56% of Millennials review and discuss product and service attributes on social networking websites (Taken Smith, 2012).
Consumer engagement can take on two forms of interaction behavior: reactive (passive/content-consuming) and proactive (contributing/content-creating) (Kim & Drumwright, 2016). Interaction can be used as a metric for consumers’ level of engagement with brand-engagement activities posted on social media (Tuten & Solomon, 2013). This metric focuses on how users contribute to brand-engagement activities and their social media platforms (Godey et al., 2016). Quantitative measures of interaction include the number of followers/fans by registration or subscription, the amount or frequency of comments, ‘likes,’ bookmarks or pins, recommendations and reviews, and the sharing of content (Tuten & Solomon, 2013). According to the Muntinga et al. (2011) study of consumers’ online brand-related activities (COBRAs) (i.e. brand-engagement activities), consumer engagement with a brand on social media can be sub-categorized into three levels of actionable behavior: consuming, contributing, and creating.

2.4.3.1. Consuming

The first behavioral level of engagement discussed by Muntinga et al. (2011) is the act of consuming content. Consuming content is a form of reactive engagement and is regarded as passive participation at a minimal level of engagement with brand-engagement activities on social media (Tsai & Men, 2013). Approximately 90% of social media users are classified as lurkers, who simply “consume content by reading posts and watching videos, but do not contribute to the flow, creation, or value of the content” (Tuten & Solomon, 2013, p. 146). Changing the dynamic of a ‘lurkers’ activity level through easy engagement encourages participation (Tuten & Solomon, 2013).
2.4.3.2. Contributing

The second behavioral level of engagement discussed by Muntinga et al. (2011) is the act of contributing content. This is a form of proactive engagement, and is constituted as a more moderate level of activeness, which includes responding to consumer or brand content such as commenting and conversing on posts (Tsai & Men, 2013). This type of content is referred to as secondary content. Secondary content is characterized as retweets, sharing links to blogs and brand pages, and to ‘like’ a brand’s page or post (Tuten & Solomon, 2013). Interaction is a form of participation involving creating content and goes beyond the update of a status or sharing secondary content.

2.4.3.3. Creating

In the context of SMM and creating content, participation has recently been referred to as the fifth ‘P’ of the marketing mix (Tuten & Solomon, 2013); often classified as proactive engagement. Participation can be defined as a ‘pull’ effect in marketing created by brands to encourage consumer interaction, and who in turn will incite more consumers to interact (Tuten & Solomon, 2013). Approximately 1% of social media users regularly participate with brands on social media, followed by roughly 9% who are intermediate participants (Tuten & Solomon, 2013). Within the framework of social media these intermediate participants have been conceptualized as creators. “Creators are social media users who actively produce original content in the form of videos, podcasts and music, stories and articles, blogs, and publish their own website” (Tuten & Solomon, 2013, p. 145). Creating is the “ultimate level of activeness involving behaviors of creating UGC” (Tsai & Men, 2013, p. 77).
Erdoğanmuş and Çiçek (2012) study revealed that the two most common types of content consumers share and create on social media is information with peers, and funny and extraordinary things. Additionally, Tsai and Men (2013) study revealed that consumers engage on social media to search for brand promotions, read and share reviews, and for entertainment. Therefore, based on Erdoğanmuş and Çiçek (2012) and Tsai and Men (2013) research, it is suggested that brand’s campaigns on social media should be centered around engaging brand-engagement activities that focus on entertainment and fun. Consumers engaging on social media is conceptualized by motivational drivers. Furthermore, these motivational drivers, also referred to as benefits, can be categorized into two dimensions: intrinsic (emotional) and extrinsic (functional). These dimensions allow for further research investigating the motivations of young consumers engaging with fashion brands on social media.

2.5. Consumers’ Motivations to Engage in Brand-Engagement Activities

Oxford Dictionary (n.d.) defines motivation as “a reason or reasons for acting or behaving in a particular way.” In the context of social media, motivation is referred to as a “persons’ desire to engage with brand-engagement activities on social media” (Parker & Wang, 2016, p. 491). Previous empirical research categorizes motives as intrinsic or extrinsic. Intrinsic motivational factors include entertainment, integration and social interaction, and information (Kim & Drumwright, 2016; Park & Kim, 2014; Muntinga et al., 2011). Extrinsic motivational factors are identified (i.e. empowerment), remuneration (i.e. external), and introjection (i.e. personal identity) (Kim & Drumwright, 2016; Park & Kim, 2014; Hoffman & Novak, 2013; Muntinga et al., 2011).
Users of social media are goal oriented, recognized as a motivational driving force that influences them to engage in brand-engagement activities on social media (Tsai & Men, 2013). Additionally, within the framework of COBRAs, other empirical studies have characterized motivation to be behavioral driven (Kim & Drumwright, 2016; Park & Kim, 2014; Muntinga et al., 2011). Similarly, empirical evidence indicates motivation is an important antecedent to attitudinal and behavioral consequences such as trust (Kim & Drumwright, 2016), engagement behaviors (Kim & Drumwright, 2016), and purchasing behaviors (Parker & Wang, 2016). Simply providing consumers the ability to share and exchange knowledge has already become an antiquated form of SMM. Fostering motivational factors to enhance consumers’ engagement in brand-engagement activities helps build brand loyalty (Vuori and Okkonen, 2012).

2.5.1. Intrinsic Motivations

Ryan and Deci (2000) define intrinsic motivation as the “participation in an activity, for inherent satisfaction, with the absence of a reinforcement or tangible reward because the intrinsically motivated person finds the activity itself enjoyable and entertaining” (p. 56). Three of the six motivational factors identified earlier represent intrinsic motives: entertainment, integration and social interaction, and information. Entertainment motivation is related to “escaping or being diverted from problems or routine, emotional release or relief, relaxation, cultural or aesthetic enjoyment, and passing time” (Muntinga et al., 2011, p. 19). Furthermore, previous research has produced evidence to suggest that even decreased levels of motivation can be increased with the fulfillment of a social relatedness need (Hoffman & Novak, 2013). Integration and social interaction, the second motivational factor identified, fulfills the need for social relatedness by providing a sense of connectedness and belonging.
for the engager seeking emotional support and companionship (Muntinga et al., 2011). Intrinsic motives of altruism have been found to be directly correlated with a consumers’ brand engagement; which can establish consumer-brand loyalty. Brands can provide consumers with the ability to participate in intrinsically driven brand-engagement activities involving collaborations in the creation of products, services, and brand experiences (Kim & Drumwright, 2016). Intrinsic motivational factors “provide strong social incentives to motivate consumers to engage” (Lee, Kim, and Kim, 2011, p. 62) and in this case, consumers will receive enjoyment from helping the brand (Johnson & Grimm, 2010). Kim and Drumwright (2016) posit in the context of intrinsic motivation, that “consumer engagement, implied in the concept of intrinsic motivation (i.e., interest and enjoyment), can be facilitated by the extent to which a marketing program satisfies the fundamental need to feel a sense of belonging (i.e., connect with and attach to others)” (p. 972).

Per consumers, key concepts to gain and maintain their trust and loyalty is increased value, peer-to-peer problem solving, transparency, corporate social responsibility, consistent quality, and personalized extras (Donaldson, 2016). These concepts describe information seeking, which, is the third intrinsic motivational factor identified by Muntinga et al. (2011). Consumers seeking brand-related information is completely voluntary; but, can enhance consumers’ engagement with brand-engagement activities thus, enhancing the strength of the consumers’ relationship with the brand (Kim & Drumwright, 2016; Park & Kim, 2014).

Consumers often view brand communities as marketing efforts to enhance the image of the brand; therefore, discrediting the value of the brand’s intrinsic motives (Lee et al., 2011). Therefore, if a brand can encourage peer-to-peer communication in their online communities those brands will establish higher levels of trust leading to stronger loyalty.
Kim and Drumwright (2016) further explained that consumers utilize social media to strengthen weak bonds with others they are unfamiliar with and strengthen deepened bonds with those they have established a close relationship with. These feelings can be associated with altruism, which is defined as a motivational influence with the ultimate goal of improving the welfare and benefits of one or more individuals not including oneself (Cheung & Lee, 2012).

2.5.2. **Extrinsic Motivational Factors**

Extrinsic motivations can be defined as “participation in an activity being instrumental and performed in the pursuit of an external reward” (Deci et al., 1991, p. 328; Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 55; Kim & Drumwright, 2016, p. 971). Previous empirical research has identified three types of extrinsic motivations: identified (empowerment), remuneration (external), and introjection (i.e. personal identity) (Kim & Drumwright, 2016; Park & Kim, 2014; Hoffman & Novak, 2013; Muntinga et al., 2011). Hoffman & Novak (2013) identified one extrinsic motivation as having the most intrinsic influence. The identified motivation, also recognized as the empowerment motivation by Muntinga et al. (2011), describes this behavior being pursued because of its personal importance to the individual (Hoffman & Novak, 2013). Muntinga et al. (2011) refers to the empowerment motivation as giving authority or exerting their influence, such as fact checking consumers and brands via social media.

Previous research has established tangible incentives, such as monetary rewards, influencing the second extrinsic motivational factor known as remuneration (Hoffman & Novak, 2013; Muntinga et al., 2011). According to Hoffman & Novak (2013) remuneration motivation, also referred to as external motivation, possesses a less self-determined drive
compared to intrinsic motivational factors. This is due to the pursuit of separable outcomes that only benefits the individual (Hoffman & Novak, 2013). The third extrinsic motivational factor, introjection (i.e. personal identity) is pursued to “gain insight into one’s self; reinforcing personal values; and identifying with and gaining recognition from peers” (Muntinga et al., 2011, p. 20). Hoffman & Novak (2013) describes this external motivation as being driven by internal pressures regarding concerns for self-approval, and achieving a degree of fashion consciousness along with high self-esteem and social acceptance.

2.6. Linking Fashion Consciousness to Consumer Engagement

Fashion is a valuable resource to consumers because it is a vehicle that allows one to visually express their ideal self or self-image (Goldsmith, Heitmeyer, & Freiden, 1991). Shephard, Pookulangara, Kinley, and Josiam (2015) discussed how not only is fashion affected by social media; but, that engagement on social media is significantly influenced by a consumers’ perceptions of image awareness, also referred to as fashion consciousness. Fashion consciousness is defined as “a person’s degree of involvement with the styles of fashion characterized by an interest in clothing and fashion, and in one’s appearance” (Nam, Hamlin, Gam, Kang, Kim, Kumphai, Starr, & Richards, 2007, p.103).

A fashion-conscious consumer is more likely to be more reliant on obtaining fashion-related information through social media (Nam et al., 2007) and therefore, are more likely to be involved in brand-engagement activities on social media (Lam & Yee, 2014). The difference in fashion consciousness between genders has guided previous empirical research, which has indicated that women are more fashion conscious than men and therefore, conducting research on the latest fashion trends is more recreational for women than it is for men who value convenience (Bakewell, Mitchell, & Rothwell, 2006; Shephard et al., 2015).
However, the evolution of social media has made the acquisition of fashion information simplified and therefore, engagement with fashion brands is more accessible, fostering the growth of fashion consciousness within all ages and genders of the Millennial generation (Lam & Yee, 2014). As the use of social media to express self-identity continues to increase, and the defining boundaries of gender and sexuality preference begins to fade, the degree and nature of fashion consciousness among Millennials continues to evolve (Shephard et al., 2015; Lam & Yee, 2014).

Leung, Yee, and Lo (2015) study revealed that the lack of satisfaction in self-identity resulted in materialism being a mediator in the relationship between fashion consciousness and consumer engagement. “Materialism is regarded as an individual’s value that guides their selection of material possessions to express their appearance, status, success and prestige” (Leung et al., 2015, p. 61). Consequently, fashion conscious consumers are materialistic because they purchase and display fashion possessions to express their identity of success and therefore, are more likely to engage in brand-engagement activities to acquire fashion information and keep up to date with fashion trends (Leung et al., 2015).

Previous empirical studies have focused on the importance of fashion consciousness and how it affects consumers’ consumption behavior and purchase decision (Casidy, 2012). As stated earlier, identifying effective marketing strategies for this vastly different generation is challenging because of their resistance to advertising, current ineffective marketing efforts, and lack of brand loyalty (Schawbel, 2015). Fashion consciousness can influence consumer behavior, by providing appealing content and engaging activities that are desirable to fashion conscious consumers (Bailey & Seock, 2010). These tailored strategies will attract consumers to engage on social media with brands, allowing brands to build upon a
consumers’ brand loyalty. Therefore, it is important for brands to foster brand-engagement activities that positively influence brand loyalty in Millennial consumers (Bailey & Seock, 2010). Fashion conscious consumers value a sense of community and possess a higher sense of responsibility to engage with these communities to promote the brand and acquire fashion information.

Fashion conscious consumers value a sense of community because it fosters social relatedness through interpersonal interaction (Kim & Drumwright, 2016). Fashion conscious consumers are more likely to seek social interaction in brand communities if that community offers a unique “connection that members of that community feel toward one another, and others not established in that community do not feel that same collective sense of difference” (Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001, p. 413). Engaging in an online brand community is a complex behavioral activity for a fashion conscious consumer, and involves not only the brand but other like-minded individuals who share similar thoughts and values (Dessart, Veloutsou, & Morgan-Thomas, 2015).

“Social values play an important role in motivating consumer behavior” (Goldsmith et al., 1991, p. 38). Social adaption theory discusses how “values help people adapt to life circumstances by directing their energies toward achieving desirable goals” (Goldsmith et al., 1991, p. 39; Kahle, 1984, p. 38). This theory is used to explain the values that influence fashion conscious consumers to engage with fashion brands. One of these values is being aware of one’s image which in turn, influences a strong desire to seek fashion-related information. This value positively influences both a consumers’ level of engagement on social media and their connection of awareness with fashion; and these influences of engagement develop fashion leaders (Shephard et al., 2015). Fashion leaders have greater
than average interest in fashion, are the first to adopt new fashion trends, and are influential to less fashion-conscious consumers in adopting new trends (Goldsmith et al., 1991). Fashion leaders possess increased levels of fashion consciousness, and therefore; have a greater tendency to engage in brand-related activities and utilize social media to stay abreast with fashion trends (Shephard et al., 2015).

Fashion consciousness may influence a consumers’ motivation to engage on social media with fashion brands. Consumers with increased levels of fashion consciousness are more likely to be actively engaged with fashion brands on social media compared to those who possess little to no degree of fashion consciousness (Casidy, 2012).
3. CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to further the understanding of young consumers’ engagement behaviors with fashion brands on social media. This study investigated young consumers’ social media behavior along with motivations and other factors that are influential in their level of engagement with fashion brands, on social media. Characteristics of social media behavior that were explored included: young consumers’ general social media usage, their level of engagement with fashion brands, their motivations to engage with fashion brands, and their perceptions of fashion brands’ engagement activities on social media.

Additionally, relationships between variables influencing young consumers’ engagement with fashion brands on social media were also examined. These factors included general social media behavior, motivations, perceptions of fashion brand’s engagement activities on social media, degree of fashion consciousness, and brand loyalty.

3.2. Research Questions

The following five research questions guided the design of the current study:

1. What are young consumers’ general social media behavior?
2. What are young consumers level of engagement with fashion brands on social media?
3. What are young consumers’ motivations to engage with fashion brands on social media?
4. What are young consumers’ perceptions of fashion brands’ consumer engagement activities on social media?
5. What factors are influencing young consumers to engage with fashion brands on social media?

3.3. Research Framework

Based on the literature reviewed, a research framework (Figure 2) was developed for this study regarding the relationships between young consumers’ brand engagement and the identified influencing factors, including social media usage, brand engagement motivations, perceived brand engagement activities, fashion consciousness, and consumer demographics.

![Figure 2. Research Framework](image-url)
3.4. Research Design

A survey (Appendix A) was conducted to collect data for this study. An IRB approval (Appendix B) was obtained through North Carolina State University prior to the survey distribution. Qualtrics, an online survey software and questionnaire tool, was used to create the online survey. Respondents were provided with a web-link directing them to the questionnaire. The survey took approximately 10 – 15 a minutes for a thorough completion. Qualtrics automatically recorded and stored the responses for data analysis. The data collection took place over an eight-week duration from November 2016 to January 2017.

The target population of this study was consumers between the ages of 18 and 35. A snowball sample method was used to recruit a convenience sample to participate in the survey. A survey link was posted to social media, as well as sent to several mailing lists. The goal was to obtain a total of 300 completed surveys. During the data collection process, ongoing monitoring was implemented to delete incomplete surveys and surveys completed in obliviously careless manners. In total 130 surveys were eliminated.

3.5. Survey Instrument

There were three sections in the survey. The first section measured consumers’ general social media behavior, including their social media usage frequency, time spent daily on social media, social media platforms used, and devices used for social media activities. The second section focused on consumers’ engagement with brands on social media, including motivations, perceived brand’s consumer engagement activities, and consumers’ engagement with brands on social media. To facilitate consumers’ completion of this section, participants were asked to identify one of the brands that shopped frequently, referred to as “Brand X.” In addition to consumers’ engagement activities with Brand X on social media,
consumers’ brand loyalty toward Brand X was also measured. The third section measured was consumers’ fashion consciousness and demographics. The following demographics were measured: gender, age, racial/ethnic group, marital status, housing situation, household income, level of education, and occupation.

Existing scales were adopted and/or modified to measure the following variables pertaining to this particular study: Perceptions of Brand X’s engagement activities on social media, consumers’ reactive engagement and proactive engagement, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and fashion consciousness. Each of these constructs was measured using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from one (strongly disagree) to seven (strongly agree).

3.5.1. Consumers’ Perceptions of Brand’s Consumer-Engagement Activities

The six-item scale developed by O’Cass and Ngo (2011) was adopted and modified per the context of this study, to assess Brand X’s consumer engagement activities on social media. The original six-item scale was designed to capture the efforts to engage with consumers from a brand’s perspective. This study modified the six-item scale to reflect consumers’ perceptions of Brand X’s efforts to engage with consumers. A sample question from this scale is as follows: “Brand X’s social media interacts with me to design offerings that meet my needs.”

3.5.2. Consumers’ Engagement with Fashion Brands on Social Media

Consumers’ engagement with brands on social media can take on two forms of interactive behavior: reactive (also referred to as passive/content-consuming) and proactive (also referred to as contributing/content-creating). This study adopted the four-item scales, developed by Tsai and Men (2013), for each form of engagement behavior. The items were
modified, per the context of this study, to assess consumers’ levels of engagement with ‘Brand X’ on social media.

3.5.2.1. Consumers’ Reactive Engagement

Reactive brand engagement is a passive form of engagement behavior that involves the consumption of content. The original four-item scale was designed to capture the extent to which consumers were engaging with ‘companies’ on Facebook. This study modified the four-item scale to capture the extent to which consumers were engaging with ‘Brand X’ on social media. A sample question from the reactive scale is as follows: “When I engage with Brand X on social media I read the brands’ posts, user comments, or product reviews.”

3.5.2.2. Consumers’ Proactive Engagement

Proactive brand engagement is an active form of engagement behavior that involves contributing to the creation of content on social media. The original four-item scale was designed to capture the extent to which consumers were engaging with ‘companies’ on Facebook. This study modified the four-item scale to capture the extent to which consumers were engaging with ‘Brand X’ on social media. A sample question from the proactive scale is as follows: “When I engage with Brand X on social media I upload brand-related videos, audio, pictures, or images.”

3.5.3. Consumers’ Motivations to Engage

Motives to engage in brand-engagement activities on social media can be intrinsic or extrinsic. Intrinsic motivations were measured by the scale developed by Johnson and Grimm (2010), and extrinsic motivations were measured by the scales developed by Vuori and Okkonen (2012).
3.5.3.1. **Intrinsic Motivations**

Intrinsic motivation is referred to as the participation in an activity, for inherent satisfaction, with the absence of a reinforcement or tangible reward because the intrinsically motivated person finds the activity itself enjoyable and entertaining (Deci et al., 2000). Johnson and Grimm’s (2010) study adopted a ten-item scale which contained items specific to respondents’ intrinsic motives to donate to organizations. This study adopted five relevant items from the original ten-item scale, and modified the items per the context of this study, to assess consumers’ intrinsic motivations to engage in Brand X’s brand-engagement activities on social media. A sample question from this scale is as follows: “Please rate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements when considering factors that motivate you to engage with Brand X on social media.” with one of the statement options being “Brand X’s success will make me happy.”

3.5.3.2. **Extrinsic Motivations**

Extrinsic motivations are defined as “participation in an activity being instrumental and performed in the pursuit of an external reward” (Deci et al., 1991, p. 328; Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 55; Kim & Drumwright, 2016, p. 971). Vuori and Okkonen’s (2012) study adopted a twelve-item scale which contained items specific to extrinsic factors motivating respondents to share knowledge through an intra-organizational social media platform. This study adopted six relevant items from the original twelve-item scale, and modified the items per the context of this study, to assess extrinsic motivations to engage in Brand X’s brand-engagement activities on social media. A sample question from this scale is as follows: “Please rate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements when
considering factors that motivate you to engage with Brand X on social media.” with one of the statement options being “Gaining financial rewards.”

3.5.4. **Fashion Consciousness**

Fashion consciousness refers to a “person’s degree of involvement with the styles or fashion of clothing” (Nam et al., 2007, p. 103). Several studies have adopted and adjusted accordingly the fashion consciousness scale developed by Wells and Tigert (1971) (Nam et al., 2007; Parker & Wang, 2016; Shephard et al., 2016). This study adopted the five-item scale developed by Shephard et al. (2016) to measure consumers’ fashion consciousness. These questions evaluate the level of importance of owning fashionable apparel and dressing in-style. A sample question from this scale is as follows: “I usually have one or more outfits that are of the latest style.”

3.6. **Data Analysis**

While the goal was to obtain 300 complete surveys, the survey link was deactivated with a total of 170 responses to be conscious of time restraints as the response rate eventually slowed greatly at the end of the 2-month data collection period. If the amount of queries that went unanswered was greater than 1/3 of the total survey, the survey was then considered incomplete, and therefore, eliminated. Fourteen of the 170 surveys were removed because respondents submitted incomplete surveys.

SPSS data analysis software was utilized to conduct various tests on the data collected from the survey. The descriptive analyses were conducted to generate the sample profile and to produce summary measures of respondents’ social media behaviors. Furthermore, reliability analysis was conducted to test the consistency of the following multi-item scales: reactive engagement, proactive engagement, intrinsic
motivation, extrinsic motivation, perceptions of brand’s consumer-engagement activities, fashion consciousness, and brand loyalty. Additionally, the significance between variables influencing young consumers’ engagement with fashion brands on social media were also examined. These factors included: general social media behavior, motivations, perceptions of fashion brand’s engagement activities on social media, degree of fashion consciousness, degree of brand loyalty, and demographics. One-Way ANOVA and Linear Regression Analysis were used to investigate those proposed relationships, and a p-value of .05 was used to determine the statistical significance of each relationship.
4. CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

4.1. Summary

A total of 156 valid surveys were included to address the five research questions in this study. This chapter consists of six major sections. The first section is an overview of respondents’ characteristics, followed by the next five sections consisting of the results, organized per the research questions. Table 3 presents the results of the reliability analyses for the multi-item scales in the survey: reactive engagement, proactive engagement, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, perceptions of brand-engagement activities, fashion consciousness, and brand loyalty. The results show that the multi-item scales each possess strong reliability with Cronbach’s alphas for all the scales above 0.70.

Table 1. Multi-Item Scales Reliability Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multi-Item Scales</th>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha</th>
<th>N of Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reactive Engagement</td>
<td>0.792</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proactive Engagement</td>
<td>0.890</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic Motivation</td>
<td>0.928</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extrinsic Motivation</td>
<td>0.879</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of Brand-Engagement Activities</td>
<td>0.904</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fashion Consciousness</td>
<td>0.862</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Loyalty</td>
<td>0.746</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2. Sample Characteristics

The demographic characteristics of the sample are summarized in Table 2. The final sample (N=156) consisted of a majority female ratio at nearly 80%. Nearly half of the respondents (45%) were in the age range of 18-24, with another 37% in the age range of 25-30 and the remaining 20% or so between 31 and 35. Much of the sample (86%) was Caucasian (non-Hispanic). Majority of the sample (64%) was single. More than half (62%)
of the sample’s housing situation was rented and had an annual household income of less than $40,000. Most respondents were at least current college students and/or had earned a four-year college degree or graduate degree.

**Table 2. Sample Characteristics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>79.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18 - 24</td>
<td>45.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25 - 30</td>
<td>37.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31 - 35</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>African-American (non-Hispanic)</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islanders</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Caucasian (non-Hispanic)</td>
<td>86.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Latino or Hispanic</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Native American or Aleut</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multiracial</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
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<th>Response Percent</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>64.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing Situation</th>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dorm</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rent</td>
<td>62.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Own, paying mortgage</td>
<td>28.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Own, no mortgage</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual Household Income</th>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; $40,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>48.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,001 - $50,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,001 - $60,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$60,001 - $75,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$75,001 - $100,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,001 - $125,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>12.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; $125,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest Level of Education</th>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School Graduate</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current College Student</td>
<td></td>
<td>33.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical School/Some College</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-year College Graduate</td>
<td></td>
<td>35.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Degree</td>
<td></td>
<td>23.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2.1. Identifying Preferred Fashion Brands

Due to the extensive amount of fashion brands existing in today’s industry, respondents were asked to identify three fashion brands they most recently purchased. Respondents were then asked to pick one of those brands and refer to that brand as Brand X in the following questions of the survey. The following brands were the most frequently identified fashion brands to represent Brand X by the respondents: Old Navy, Nike, Forever 21, Express, and J. Crew. Around 42% of respondents identified less than 20% of their clothing from Brand X, with another 36% indicating a 20-40% closet share. Only about 18% respondents indicated that they had a 40-60% closet share for Brand X (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Closet Share of Brand X

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Closet Share</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 20%</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20% - 40%</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>35.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40% - 60%</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 60%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 demonstrates the survey results which showed that the mean of consumers’ brand loyalty was 5.53 (on a seven-point scale), indicating that respondents exhibited a high degree of brand loyalty towards Brand X.

**Table 4.** Consumers’ Brand Loyalty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand Loyalty</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I consider myself to be loyal to Brand X.</td>
<td>5.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When buying apparel products, Brand X would be my first choice.</td>
<td>4.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will keep on buying Brand X as long as it provides me with satisfied products.</td>
<td>6.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am still willing to buy Brand X even if its price is a little higher than Brand X's competitors.</td>
<td>5.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would love to recommend Brand X to my friends.</td>
<td>5.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean for the Scale</strong></td>
<td>5.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2.2. Fashion Consciousness

Table 5 depicts consumers’ fashion consciousness. The survey results indicated that the sample in general held high level of fashion consciousness with an overall mean of 4.38.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree of Fashion Consciousness</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I usually have one or more outfits that are of the latest style.</td>
<td>5.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I must choose between the two, I dress for fashion, not for comfort.</td>
<td>4.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An important part of my life and activities is dressing in-style.</td>
<td>4.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important to me that my clothes be of the latest style.</td>
<td>4.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A person should try to dress in style.</td>
<td>4.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I often try the latest hair styles when they change.</td>
<td>3.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean for the Scale</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.38</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3. RQ1: What are young consumers’ general social media behavior?

Characteristics of consumers’ general social media behavior that were explored included: frequency of use, preferred access device, general use of social media, and their preferred platforms.

4.3.1. Young Consumers Social Media Usage

These questions were designed to observe how frequently respondents were active on social media, implemented with questions indicating both weekly and daily usage. The results from the survey showed that the majority of respondents (75%) portrayed themselves as heavy users of social media by checking social media frequently (33.3% checked whenever have a moment, 26.3% check 6-8 times a day, and 16.0% hourly). In terms of amount of time spent on a daily basis, the majority of respondents (27.1%) spent 1 – 2 hours on social media (25.8% spending 30 – 60 minutes, and 20.6% spending 2 – 4 hours). The survey results also showed that most respondents (95.5%) accessed social media via smartphones.
### Table 6. Social Media Usage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of Social Media Use</th>
<th>Frequently Used Device</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Typical Week</strong></td>
<td><strong>Typical Day</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whenever I have a moment of free time</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - 8 times a day</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hourly</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 - 6 times a day</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - 4 times a day</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - 2 times a day</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a week</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 time per week</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't participate</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Device</strong></td>
<td><strong>Count</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smartphone</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laptop Computer</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Tablet</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desktop Computer</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To identify the levels of engagement young consumers are participating in on social media, respondents’ general social media engagement activities were profiled. The results (Table 7) from the survey showed that, in general, most respondents use social media to read/watch content (such as reviews, videos, photos, and blogs) as well as socialize with friends. Other purposes of using social media included upload contents, promote self, and form new relationship. Additionally, less frequently used, social media general activities identified by respondents in the ‘other’ category were: promote my job, see what old friends are doing, promote our business, business/advertising, and social activism.

### Table 7. Respondents’ General Social Media Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Social Media Use</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read/watch content (reviews, videos, photos, blogs)</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>91.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialize with friends</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>80.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upload content (reviews, videos, photos, blogs)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>51.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote yourself</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form new relationships</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.3.2. Preferred Social Media Platforms

Table 8 presents results to questions regarding account ownership and usage of specific social media platforms. In response to social media account ownership, five common social media platforms were listed and respondents were asked to check all that apply.
including an option of ‘other’ for respondents to identify any sites not listed. Using descriptive analysis, the results of the survey depict that it is common for consumers to own multiple social media platform accounts with Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat ranking highest in account ownership of respondents. Twitter and YouTube were also used by almost half of the respondents. Additional social media platforms identified by respondents in the ‘other’ category was: Pinterest, Tumblr, LinkedIn, Reddit, VSCO, Vine, Yelp, Ravelry, Bumble, Venmo, House Party, and GroupMe, Google, Poshmark, Jane.com, emails, as well as the fashion brand’s home webpage. Furthermore, questions were implemented to identify social media platforms frequently visited for both general use and to engage with fashion brands. The survey results showed that, in general, Facebook was the most frequently used platform, followed by Instagram and Snapchat. Instagram was found as the most frequently used social media platform when engaging with fashion brands, followed by Facebook.

**Table 8. Social Media Platforms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Media Platforms</th>
<th>Account Ownership</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>General Usage</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Fashion Brand Engagement</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>98.1%</td>
<td></td>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>44.2%</td>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>66.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>85.9%</td>
<td></td>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>37.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snapchat</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>77.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td>Snapchat</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>Snapchat</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>51.3%</td>
<td></td>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>48.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4. RQ2: What are young consumers level of engagement with fashion brands on social media?

Questions regarding consumers’ level of engagement were implemented. These questions were designed to observe two types of engagement, reactive engagement and proactive engagement. Reactive engagement is a passive form of engagement involving viewing pictures, watching videos, reading brand and consumer posts, and ‘liking’ or ‘following’ a brand. Proactive engagement is an active form of engagement involving
contributing to conversations, sharing brand posts, recommending brand-related content, and uploading brand-related content (e.g. videos, audio, pictures, or images).

4.4.1. Consumers’ Reactive Engagement

Table 9 presents results to questions regarding consumers’ reactive engagement with Brand X on social media. Seven common types of reactive engagement were listed and respondents were asked to check all that apply including an option of ‘other’ for respondents to identify any interactive activities not listed. Using descriptive analysis, the results of the survey showed that visiting Brand X’s website is the most common reactive engagement activity of respondents (72.4%), followed by watching a brand’s video (39.7%), and reading a brand’s post (35.3%). About 20% of the respondents indicated no engagement with the select Brand X. In addition to the reactive engagement activities provided, the ‘other’ category, identified by the respondents, listed reactive activities less frequently engaged in: owning an app, emails, visiting Brand X’s home webpage, repost new designs, consult, and sales.

Table 9. Forms of Reactive Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forms of Reactive Engagement</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visit their website</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>72.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watched a brand's video</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>39.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read a brand's post</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not engage with them online</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look out for news stories</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read their blog</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Furthermore, the survey results showed that the mean of reactive engagement was 4.90 (Table 10). This rating indicated that respondents exhibited a high level of reactive engagement with Brand X on social media.
### Table 10. Reactive Engagement Rating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reactive Engagement</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When I engage with Brand X on social media I view pictures of the brand or product in social media.</td>
<td>5.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I engage with Brand X on social media I watch videos about the brand or product in social media.</td>
<td>4.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I engage with Brand X on social media I read about the brands' posts, user comments, or product reviews.</td>
<td>4.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I engage with Brand X on social media I like or follow the brand pages (e.g., becoming a fan or following).</td>
<td>4.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean for the Scale</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.90</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 4.4.2. Consumers’ Proactive Engagement

Table 11 presents results to questions regarding consumers’ proactive engagement with Brand X on social media. In response to the types of brand-engagement activities consumers engage in, twelve common types of proactive engagement activities were listed and respondents were asked to check all that apply including an option of ‘other’ for respondents to identify any proactive engagement activities not listed. Using descriptive analysis, the results of the survey showed more passive forms of proactive engagement with Brand X on social media ‘Liking’ a brand page as the most common proactive engagement activity of respondents (51.9%), followed by ‘following’ a brand on Instagram (30.1%), and entering a competition (17.9%). In the ‘other’ category the following proactive activities were listed and identified as being less frequently engaged in: none of the following, N/A, ‘liked’ Brand X’s post on Instagram, and interacted via direct message with Brand X's consumer service representative to ask about sizing and shipping.
Table 11. Forms of Proactive Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forms of Proactive Engagement</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liked a brand page</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>51.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow them on Instagram</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>30.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entered a competition</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liked a customer's post on a brand page</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared a brand's post</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commented on a brand page</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrote a review</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared a brand's photo/video to your own page</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow them on Twitter</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared your own photo/video on the brand's page</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sent a direct message to a brand</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commented on a customer's post on a brand page</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additionally, the survey results also showed a proactive engagement mean rate of 3.07 (Table 12). This rating indicated that respondents exhibited a low level of proactive engagement, on social media, with Brand X.

Table 12. Proactive Engagement Rating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proactive Engagement</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When I engage with Brand X on social media I engage in conversations about the brand (e.g., commenting, asking questions, and sharing questions).</td>
<td>3.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I engage with Brand X on social media I share the brands' posts (e.g., videos, audio, pictures, or texts) on my own social media page.</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I engage with Brand X on social media I recommend brand-related content to my social media contacts (e.g., retweeting).</td>
<td>3.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I engage with Brand X on social media I upload brand-related videos, audio, pictures, or images.</td>
<td>2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean for the Scale</td>
<td>3.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.5. RQ3: What are young consumers’ motivations to engage with fashion brands on social media?

Descriptive analysis was used to identify motivations that encourage young consumers to participate in brand-engagement activities on social media. Questions were implemented based on intrinsic motivations and extrinsic motivations. Intrinsic motivation is a behavior driven by non-tangible reward, and extrinsic motivation is a behavior driven by a tangible reward (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Johnson & Grimm, 2010; Kim & Drumwright, 2016). The survey showed that respondents have a high degree of intrinsic motivation (with a mean rating of 5.00) and a relatively lower degree of extrinsic motivation (with a mean rating of 4.14).

4.5.1. Intrinsic Motivations

The respondents had an intrinsic motivation mean rate of 5.00 (Table 13). This result indicated that respondents exhibited a high degree of intrinsic motivation to engage in brand-engagement activities, on social media, with Brand X.

Table 13. Intrinsic Motivations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intrinsic Motivation</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I will support Brand X to see them succeed.</td>
<td>5.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand X's success will make me happy.</td>
<td>5.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will support Brand X if they need help from consumers like me.</td>
<td>4.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The good feeling I have when I support Brand X.</td>
<td>4.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I care about Brand X's success.</td>
<td>5.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean for the Scale                                      5.01
4.5.2. **Extrinsic Motivations**

Furthermore, the respondents had an extrinsic motivation mean rate of 4.14 (Table 14). These ratings indicated that respondents exhibited a relatively high degree of extrinsic motivation to engage in brand-engagement activities, on social media, with Brand X.

**Table 14. Extrinsic Motivations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extrinsic Motivation</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Achieving my own personal goals.</td>
<td>4.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand the scope of my influence.</td>
<td>3.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectation to receive knowledge.</td>
<td>4.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaining financial rewards.</td>
<td>4.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaining recognition from peers.</td>
<td>3.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting more acknowledgment and better acceptance of myself and my ideas.</td>
<td>3.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean for the Scale</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.14</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.5.3. **Identifying Motivations to Engage**

In response to consumers’ motivations to ‘post,’ ‘like,’ or ‘follow’ Brand X on social media, twelve common motivations were listed and respondents were asked to check all that apply including an option of ‘other’ for respondents to identify any reasons not listed. The decision to ‘post,’ ‘like,’ or ‘follow’ Brand X on social media showed that respondents “liked Brand X”, “had a desire to identify promotional/discount opportunities”, and “wanted to keep up-to-date on the latest fashion trends” (Table 15). In the ‘other’ category the following reasons were also listed and identified as being less frequently used: N/A, have not ‘posted’, ‘liked’, or ‘followed’ Brand X, promote made in the USA, sales, and to show appreciation for Brand X’s service.
Table 15. Motivations to Engage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consumers' Motivations</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reasons to 'Post,' 'Like,' or 'Follow' Brand X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You like the brand</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>53.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To identify promotional/discount opportunities</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>52.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To keep up-to-date on the latest fashion trends</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>44.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For information</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>37.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To feel connected with a brand</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The brand has said/posted something interesting</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To enter a competition</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For entertainment</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To feel part of a community</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A friend's recommendation</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To resolve an issue</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To complain</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.6. RQ4: What are young consumers’ perceptions of fashion brands’ engagement activities on social media?

A question was implemented to identify respondents’ perceptions of Brand X’s engagement activities offered on social media websites. Using descriptive analysis, the survey results in Table 16 showed that the average rating for respondents’ perceptions of brand-engagement activities had a mean value of 4.43. This rating showed that respondents’ perceptions of Brand X’s engagement were relatively on the high end of the scale.
Table 16. Perceptions of Brand-Engagement Activities on Social Media

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceptions of Brand-Engagement Activities</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand X's social media interacts with me to serve me better.</td>
<td>4.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand X's social media works together with me to produce offerings that better suit me.</td>
<td>4.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand X's social media interacts with me to design offerings that meet my needs.</td>
<td>4.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand X's social media provides services in conjunction with me.</td>
<td>4.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand X's social media allows my involvement in providing services to me to get the experience that I want.</td>
<td>4.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand X's social media provides me with services that I help create.</td>
<td>3.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean for the Scale</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.43</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.7. RQ5: What factors are influencing young consumers to engage with fashion brands on social media?

SPSS data analysis software was used to test the significance of the relationships between young consumers’ engagement on social media and factors influencing their engagement, which included: respondents’ general social media usage, age, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, respondents’ perceptions of brand-engagement activities, degree of fashion consciousness, and degree of brand loyalty. One-Way ANOVA and Linear Regression Analyses were each used to determine any significant difference between those relationships, and a p-value of .05 was used to determine the statistical significance of each relationship.

4.7.1. General Social Media Usage and Engagement on Social Media

To test the relationship between social media usage and consumers’ brand engagement on social media, a One-way ANOVA was conducted with the social media usage being classified into three categories of light usage, moderate usage, and heavy usage.
The One-Way ANOVA Analysis showed that engagement levels were not significantly different among consumers with different levels of social media usage.

Table 17. Relationship between General Social Media Use and Engagement on Social Media

![ANOVATable](image)

4.7.2. Respondents’ Age and Engagement on Social Media

Similarly, a One-Way ANOVA Analysis also conducted to test the relationship between consumers’ engagement and age. Results showed that consumers’ level of engagement on social media (i.e. reactive engagement and proactive engagement) was not significantly different among consumers in different age groups (Table 18).

Table 18. Relationship between Respondents’ Ages and Engagement on Social Media

![ANOVATable](image)

4.7.3. Factors Influencing Reactive Engagement on Social Media

Table 19 presents results of the relationships between respondents’ reactive engagement on social media and factors influencing their reactive engagement. The results of
the Linear Regression Analysis showed that consumers’ reactive engagement was significantly influenced by the following factors: respondents’ degree of intrinsic motivation, perceptions of brand-engagement activities on social media, and their degree of fashion consciousness. No significant influence was found from the following factors: extrinsic motivation and brand loyalty.

**Table 19. Relationship between Variables and Reactive Engagement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Coefficientsa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unstandardized Coefficients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IntrinsicMotivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ExtrinsicMotivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perceptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FashionConsciousness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BrandLoyalty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*a. Dependent Variable: ReactiveEngagement*

**4.7.4. Factors Influencing Proactive Engagement on Social Media**

Table 20 presents results of respondents’ proactive engagement on social media and factors influencing their proactive engagement. The results of the Linear Regression Analysis showed that consumers’ proactive engagement was significantly influenced by the following factors: respondents’ perceptions of brand-engagement activities on social media, their degree of brand loyalty, and their degree of intrinsic motivation. No significant influence was found from the following factors: extrinsic motivation and fashion consciousness.
Table 20. Relationship between Variables and Proactive Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Coefficients</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>.492</td>
<td>.750</td>
<td>.656</td>
<td>.513</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IntrinsicMotivation</td>
<td>.379</td>
<td>.114</td>
<td>.317</td>
<td>3.327</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ExtrinsicMotivation</td>
<td>.114</td>
<td>.104</td>
<td>.102</td>
<td>1.098</td>
<td>.274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perceptions</td>
<td>.403</td>
<td>.117</td>
<td>.300</td>
<td>3.434</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FashionConsciousness</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>.093</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td>.184</td>
<td>.854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BrandLoyalty</td>
<td>-.300</td>
<td>.148</td>
<td>-.181</td>
<td>-2.020</td>
<td>.045</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: ProactiveEngagement
5. CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1. Overview of Study

The purpose of this study was to identify young consumers’ engagement with fashion brands on social media, as well as examine the behaviors, motivations, and other factors that influence the level at which they engage with fashion brands and related content on social media. The following research questions guided the current research: (1) what are young consumers’ general social media behavior; (2) what are young consumers level of engagement with fashion brands on social media; (3) what are young consumers’ motivations to engage with fashion brands on social media; (4) what are young consumers’ perceptions of fashion brands’ engagement activities on social media, and (5) what factors are influencing young consumers to engage with fashion brands on social media? A research model was formulated to address the research questions (see Figure 2).

A summary and discussion of the findings are provided in the first section of this chapter, followed by the implications of these findings for brands’ social media marketing (SMM) efforts. The chapter concludes by identifying limitations to the consumer-brand engagement (CBE) behaviors of young consumers, and providing recommendations for future research.

5.1.1. Young Consumers’ General Social Media Behavior

Young consumers demonstrate heavy usage of social media, most often accessed via the convenience of a smartphone device that allows users to access social media at any time and in any place. Previous research on social media platforms has shown that young consumers prefer some platforms over others. Facebook has the largest population of Millennial members, followed by Snapchat and Instagram (Duggan, Ellison, Lampe, Lenhart
& Madden, 2015). The current study’s findings are consistent with the research, as survey results indicated that Facebook was the most frequently used social media platform, then Instagram and Snapchat. Notably, results of this study also suggest that Millennials prefer Instagram when engaging with fashion brands.

Additionally, results demonstrate that young consumers generally use social media to read or watch content, such as reviews, videos, photos, and blogs, as well as to socialize with friends. This points to a behavioral level of engagement identified by Muntinga et al. (2011) as the act of consuming content, which is a kind of passive participation at a minimal level of engagement with brand-related activities on social media (Tsai & Men, 2013).

5.1.2. Young Consumers’ Levels of Engagement with Fashion Brands on Social Media

Consumer engagement can take on two forms of behavior: reactive (passive/content-consuming) and proactive (contributing/content-creating) (Kim & Drumwright, 2016). This study found that Millennials exhibit a high level of reactive engagement with fashion brands on social media, as more than 72% of them “visit a brand’s website” when they want to interact with a fashion brand—a reactive form of behavioral engagement. Simply put, these young consumers were not actively engaging with or contributing content, but instead merely taking in and reacting to content. This is in direct alignment with previous research evaluating consumers’ levels of engagement. Others have likewise found that most social media users are lurkers who merely “consume content by reading posts and watching videos, but do not contribute to the flow, creation, or value of the content” (Tuten & Solomon, 2013, p. 146).

Conversely, it seems that Millennials in the current study exhibited a low level of proactive engagement with fashion brands on social media. These results are consistent with
the research reporting that approximately 1% of social media users regularly engage proactively with brands on social media, and only 9% of consumers on social media are classified as intermediate participants. Moreover, the act of friending, following, or liking a brand’s social media page represents some of the lowest levels of consumers’ proactive social media engagement (Tuten & Solomon, 2013). This study, concurring with extant research, found that more than 50% of Millennials said that they “liked a brand page” when proactively engaging with a fashion brand on social media.

5.1.3. **Motivations for Young Consumers to Engage with Fashion Brands on Social Media**

Results indicated that Millennials exhibited a high degree of intrinsic motivation when engaging in fashion brand-engagement activities on social media. More than 53% of Millennials in this study reported that “liking a fashion brand” was an incentive to intrinsically motivate them to engage with that brand, and this was notably the motivation most cited in the study. These results are consistent with research stating that intrinsic motivational factors “provide strong social incentives to motivate consumers to engage” (Lee et al., 2011, p. 62), including the enjoyment a consumer gets from helping the brand (Johnson & Grimm, 2010).

Conversely, Millennials in the current study exhibited only a relatively high degree of extrinsic motivation when engaging in CBE activities with fashion brands on social media. The second most identified motivation to engage is to “identify promotional/discount opportunities,” represented by more than 52% of Millennials in this study. Promotions and discount opportunities are tangible, often monetary incentives that extrinsically motivate Millennials to engage with fashion brands on social media. Other research aligns with the
current study’s findings that consumers engage on social media to search for brand promotions, read and share reviews, and be entertained (Tsai & Men, 2013).

5.1.4. Young Consumers’ Perceptions of Fashion Brands’ Engagement Activities on Social Media

Brands use engagement activities as a strategy to leverage the value of social media as a marketing tool (Tuten & Solomon, 2013), and the current research similarly found that Millennials exhibit relatively high perceptions of CBE activities on social media. As de Vries and Carlson (2014) claim, a consumer’s perception of a brand’s engagement activities may influence his/her participation with that brand, and could arguably then affect the success of the brand’s marketing efforts.

5.1.5. Factors Influencing Young Consumers’ Engagement with Fashion Brands on Social Media

Different factors were identified influencing consumers’ proactive and reactive engagement with fashion brands on social media. Consumers’ reactive engagement was influenced by consumers’ intrinsic motivations, their perceptions of brand–engagement activities, and their degree of fashion consciousness. For the proactive engagement, the following factors were found having significant influences: intrinsic motivations, their perceptions of brand–engagement activities, and their degree of brand loyalty.

Findings suggested that the frequency at which Millennials generally use social media does not impact their level of engagement with fashion brands. Results also indicated that a Millennial’s age does not impact his/her level of engagement with fashion brands on social media. These results support research conducted by Bolton et al. (2013) that classify Millennials as “digital natives,” based on their exposure to technology throughout their entire
lives, this characteristic is associated with a formidable familiarity with the digital world and has profoundly affected the way this generation lives and works. This constitutes Millennials as a homogeneous group representing heavy social media usage which, compared to an older generation, such as Generation X or Baby Boomers, may reflect a difference in usage between ages within those generations.

5.1.5.1. Reactive Engagement

Motivations. The study’s findings suggested that only intrinsic motivation has a positive impact on Millennials’ level of reactive engagement, as those with a high degree of internally motivating factors are more likely to engage with fashion brands on social media. Intrinsic motives allow the consumer to self-identify and value match with a brand. These results are consistent with Vuori and Okkonen’s (2012) research on intrinsic motivation which reveals that intrinsic factors such as altruism, self-efficacy, and the enjoyment of helping others (Vuori & Okkonen, 2012), have been found to motivate consumers through strong social incentives (Lee, Kim, & Kim, 2011).

Perceptions of brand-engagement activities. The current study found a positive correlation between Millennials’ perceptions of CBE activities and their level of reactive engagement with fashion brands on social media. In other words, Millennials with high perceptions of brand-engagement activities are more likely to interact with fashion brands on social media. These results support the de Vries and Carlson (2014) study, which revealed that a consumer’s perception of a brands’ activities could influence their participation.

Fashion consciousness. The results of the study are consistent with earlier research which revealed that consumers with increased levels of fashion consciousness are more likely to be actively engaged with fashion brands on social media, compared to those who have
little to no awareness about fashion (Casidy, 2012). Results of this study showed that Millennials’ degree of fashion consciousness has a positive impact on their level of reactive engagement, as those who are highly conscious of fashion brands and trends reported being more likely to reactively engage with fashion brands on social media. Much like the findings on brand loyalty and CBE, results indicated that a Millennial’s degree of fashion consciousness does not have an impact on their proactive engagement with fashion brands on social media.

5.1.5.2. Proactive Engagement

*Motivations.* The results showed that only intrinsic motivation also has a positive impact on Millennials’ level of proactive engagement. Brands can provide consumers with the ability to participate in intrinsically driven proactive brand-engagement activities involving co-collaborations with fashion brands in the creation of products, services, and brand experiences (Kim & Drumwright, 2016).

*Perceptions of brand-engagement activities.* The current study found a positive correlation between Millennials’ perceptions of CBE activities and their level of proactive engagement with fashion brands on social media. In other words, Millennials with high perceptions of brand-engagement activities are more likely to interact with fashion brands on social media. Specifically, de Vries and Carlson (2014) revealed that the more engaged a brand is with a consumer the more involved a consumer is with the brand. This leads to a higher probability that the consumer will demonstrate increased levels of proactive engagement behaviors (de Vries & Carlson, 2014).

*Brand loyalty.* Keller (2013) states that a consumer’s willingness to engage with a brand confirms the brand holds the strongest level of loyalty in the person’s mind. Findings
suggested that brand loyalty positively impacts Millennials’ level of proactive engagement, as those with a high degree of brand loyalty reported being more likely to proactively engage with fashion brands on social media. On the other hand, per this study’s results, Millennials’ degree of brand loyalty did not impact their reactive engagement with fashion brands on social media.

5.2. Implications of the Study

Usage of social media is growing at a monumental velocity, superseding all other channels of communication, which has made SMM of increasing importance for brands seeking to market and advertise their products by eliciting consumer engagement. Yet creating and establishing positive CBE activities on social media has become a complex paradigm, particularly due to the young, unique, and digitally savvy Millennials generation. In this era of social media, the new dynamic of marketing to Millennials is centered on facilitating continuous engagement and developing one-on-one relationships with these young consumers. To gain the benefits of using social media as a highly efficient and cost-effective CBE resource, the first step is to understand the Millennials generation, the elements of brand engagement, and how these young consumers’ level of engagement is influenced by their motivational behaviors and personality traits. This study provided insight into the topic.

Based on the results of the study, fashion brands seeking to reach Millennials should have an active presence on Instagram, as well as the more popular Facebook and Snapchat. In addition, making their online content mobile-friendly will allow visitors to easily access and use brands’ websites on their mobile devices. Due to the importance of mobility to the Millennials generation, another recommendation is for fashion brands to create and offer
mobile applications for their brands; this would allow young consumers to download the application to their devices and more easily access the brand’s online content.

The relationship between young consumers’ intrinsic motivations and their level of engagement on social media, as indicated by the current study, also has significant implications for fashion brands. Results support the notion that young consumers are intrinsically motivated to a high degree, and as discussed earlier, extant empirical research points to motivation as critical first step to establishing trust, enabling engagement, and inciting purchasing behaviors (Kim & Drumwright, 2016; Parker & Wang, 2016). Fashion brands, then, can increase young consumers’ level of consumer engagement with the brand by addressing these intrinsic motivations. Focusing on the components of consumers’ intrinsic motivations (integration, information, and entertainment) can help fashion brands design affective CBE activities. For example, they can offer activities and content to let young consumers know they helped the brand be successful, as well as provide them with the ability to participate in intrinsic, brand-related activities involving collaboration in the co-creation of products, services, or brand experiences (Kim & Drumwright, 2016).

Fashion brands can also make use of this study’s findings on the relationship between young consumers’ perceptions of CBE activities on social media and their level of engagement. Millennials were found to have a high perception of brand-engagement activities on social media, which suggests that fashion brands should facilitate CBE activities that foster strong associations with young consumers. Based on the study’s findings, this may work to increase consumers’ perceptions of brand-engagement activities and boost their overall levels of engagement with the fashion brands. Research has shown that the more engaged a brand is with a consumer, the more involved that person is with the brand. Hence,
there is arguably a higher probability that the consumer will demonstrate increased levels of exploratory (engaging) behaviors (de Vries & Carlson, 2014). O’Cass and Ngo (2011) validated this concept when their study revealed a positive correlation between the value of a brand’s co-creation activity and a consumer’s decision to engage with the brand-related activities. Thus, brand-engagement activities that act explicitly as mechanisms for encouraging consumer interaction with a brand can serve to further cultivate a valuable consumer-brand relationship (de Vries & Carlson, 2014).

Fashion brands should also pay attention to this study’s findings on the relationship between young consumers’ degree of brand loyalty and their proactive engagement with the brand. Though the young consumers in the study reported that their favorite brand represents less than 40% of their closet share, results also revealed that these consumers have a high degree of brand loyalty. It appears, then, that young consumers are indeed brand-loyal—but to multiple brands, not just one. With the greater understanding of this factor gained from the current study, fashion brands can increase the level of consumer engagement through proactive CBE activities designed to appeal to the trait of multi-brand loyalty. In doing so, brands can also keep in mind that young consumers in the current study reported that they identify with more moderate forms of proactive engagement, such as “liking a brand’s page” or “watching a brand’s video.” Erdoğmuş and Çiçek (2012) identified the two most common types of content that consumers share and create on social media as information with peers, followed by humorous or extraordinary things. Therefore, based on empirical research and the study results, a fashion brand’s campaigns on social media should be based on proactive brand-engagement activities that focus on entertainment and fun. For example, brands could
create and post a video to which young consumers can easily relate, and that they will want to share with peers on social media.

This study’s findings have significant implications pertaining to the relationship between young consumers’ degree of fashion consciousness and their reactive engagement behaviors. First, it should be noted that findings in the study revealed young consumers have only a relatively high degree of fashion consciousness. As Shephard et al. (2015) discuss, not only is fashion affected by social media, but, conversely, a consumer’s engagement on social media is significantly influenced by his/her degree of fashion consciousness. Fashion brands can increase the level of consumer-engagement with reactive brand-engagement activities by addressing this personality trait. Young consumers are generally more likely to be reliant on obtaining fashion-related information through social media (Nam et al., 2007), so one could assume they would therefore be more involved in reactive brand-engagement activities delivered to them via social media platforms (Lam & Yee, 2014). By providing appealing content that is desirable to consumers who are seeking fashion-related advice, fashion brands can further influence consumer engagement (Bailey & Seock, 2010). This includes reactive CBE activities such as fashion-trend blogs, which are consumer-tailored strategies that Millennials value. It is important for fashion brands to foster such valuable peer-to-peer communication in their social media communities, if they wish to appeal to today’s young consumer.

Overall, fashion brands must focus on the engagement behaviors of young consumers and the factors that influence their engagement. Brands should take an active approach to moving away from traditional marketing methods on social media (general marketing strategies for the masses), and instead restructure themselves as advocates of consumer
engagement with advanced, dynamic methods of communication that involve collaborative and tailored relationships with consumers.

5.3. Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research

The current study examined several relationships pertaining to behaviors and traits of young consumers related to their engagement with fashion brands on social media. The findings of this study contribute to the fields of both consumer behavior and SMM. However, there are a number of limitations within the context of this research that should be noted.

The sample used in this study was not representative of the general population, as it employed a snowballing method to recruit a convenience sample to participate in the survey. Moreover, the study was intentionally targeted toward understanding Millennial consumers. Thus, due to the unique characteristics among various generations, studies that use a sample from the general population may result in different findings regarding consumers’ behaviors and motivations. Future research, then, should replicate the study using a more diverse sample from the general population, including other generations. Gender was another limitation of this study’s sample. The respondents to the survey were heavily split in terms of gender, with the majority being female. There are unquestionably unique characteristics between different genders, so an avenue for future research could include replicating the study using a more, if not entirely, gender-balanced sample.

The survey method of distributing online caused some respondents to carelessly answer the queries in the survey. The length of the survey used in this study caused some respondents to prematurely terminate their participation without completing it. To ensure a higher number of completed surveys and greater participant commitment, future research
should include a shorter, more focused survey. Notably, a briefer survey may also allow for
the inclusion of a larger sample size in the study.

This study focused on consumers’ brand-engagement as it relates specifically to
fashion brands. Other types of brands that are active on and influence social media were
eliminated from the scope of this study. Future research, then, could focus on various brand
types and their CBE activities on social media, to gain a broader perspective of consumers’
overall engagement behaviors on social media; this could even include a comparison and
contrast of these behaviors by brand type.

Additionally, other factors influencing consumers’ brand-engagement activities on
social media could be explored in future research. For example, a consumer’s trust for a
brand has been found to have influence that may impact his/her engagement behaviors (Kim
& Drumwright, 2016). To examine this, researchers could compare a consumer’s level of
trust to his/her brand engagement to determine if there is a direct correlation.

In conclusion, the present study sought to identify the social media behaviors,
motivations, and other factors that influence Millennials’ engagement behaviors with fashion
brands on social media. The findings of the study, including the factors identified as
influencing engagement behaviors and potential improvements suggested for brand-related
activities, can help the industry build and strengthen co-collaborative and personalized
marketing programs focused on the consumer—who, after all, is the bottom line.
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7. APPENDICES
Appendix A

Survey Instrument

You are agreeing that you are between the ages of 18 - 35 years and are agreeing to participate in this study. Your completion of the survey implies your consent for the researchers to use the data for research purpose. The data you provided will be analyzed collectively. You have the right to skip any question that you do not feel comfortable answering in the survey. If you are between the ages of 18 - 35 and you agree to participate in this study, please select 'yes' below to proceed on to the survey. If you are not between the ages of 18 - 35 and/ or do not agree to participate in the survey, please select 'no.'

Julie Wiegand, Graduate Student, jrwiegan@ncsu.edu

Dr. Yingjiao Xu, Associate Professor, yxu11@ncsu.edu
I. General Social Media Behavior and Preference

Q2 In a typical week, how often do you log-on to social media sites?
☐ Whenever I have a moment of free time
☐ Hourly
☐ 6 - 8 times a day
☐ 4 - 6 times a day
☐ 3 - 4 times a day
☐ 1 - 2 times a day
☐ Once a week
☐ Less than 1 time per week
☐ Don't participate

Q3 In a typical day, how much time do you spend on social media websites?
☐ 0 - 10 minutes
☐ 10 - 30 minutes
☐ 30 - 60 minutes
☐ 1 - 2 hours
☐ 2 - 4 hours
☐ 4 - 6 hours
☐ 6 - 8 hours
☐ 8+ hours

Q4 Which of the following devices do you use most frequently to access social media websites?
☐ Computer Tablet
☐ Laptop Computer
☐ Desktop Computer
☐ Smartphone
☐ Other (please specify) ____________________

Q5 Which of the following social media websites do you currently have an account with? (Please check all that apply)
☐ Facebook
☐ Instagram
☐ Twitter
☐ Snapchat
☐ YouTube
☐ Other (please specify) ____________________
Q6 In a typical week which of the follow social media websites do you use most often?
☐ Facebook
☐ Instagram
☐ Twitter
☐ Snapchat
☐ YouTube
☐ Other (please specify) __________________

Q7 Which platform(s) do you use to engage with fashion brands? (Please check all that apply)
☐ Facebook
☐ Instagram
☐ Twitter
☐ Snapchat
☐ YouTube
☐ Other (please specify) __________________

Q8 In general, what ways do you regularly use online social media? (Please check all that apply)
☐ Form new relationships
☐ Socialize with friends
☐ Promote yourself
☐ Upload content (reviews, videos, photos, blogs)
☐ Read/watch content (reviews, videos, photos, blogs)
☐ Other (please specify) __________________

Q9 Please identify the last three fashion brands you have most recently purchased.

Q10 Please pick one of these brands and list below. Please refer to this brand when you see Brand X in the following questions.

Q11 What is the approximate proportion of Brand X in your entire closet?
☐ 10% - 20%
☐ 20% - 40%
☐ 40% - 60%
☐ Over 60%
Q12 Please rate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I consider myself to be loyal to Brand X. When buying apparel products, Brand X would be my first choice.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will keep on buying Brand X as long as it provides me with satisfied products.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am still willing to buy Brand X even if its price is a little higher than Brand X’s competitors.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would love to recommend Brand X to my friends.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
II. Engagement

Q13 With Brand X in mind, how do you interact with them online? (Please check all that apply)
- Visit their website
- Liked their brand page on Facebook
- Follow them on Twitter
- Follow them on Instagram
- Look out for news stories
- Read their blog
- I do not engage with them online
- Other (please specify) ____________________

Q14 In terms of interacting with Brand X on social media, have you ever done any of the following? (Please check all that apply)
- Liked a brand page
- Commented on a brand page
- Wrote a review
- Shared a brand’s post
- Read a brand’s post
- Sent a direct message to a brand
- Shared your own photo/video on the brand’s page
- Watched a brand’s video
- Shared a brand’s photo/video to your own page
- Entered a competition
- Liked a customer’s post on a brand page
- Commented on a customer’s post on a brand page
- Other (please specify) ____________________
Q15 What are your reasons behind your decision to 'Post,' ‘Like,’ or ‘Follow’ Brand X on social media? (check all that apply)
☐ To complain
☐ To keep up-to-date on the latest fashion trends
☐ To identify promotional/discount opportunities
☐ To feel connected with a brand
☐ To feel part of a community
☐ To resolve an issue
☐ To enter a competition
☐ For information
☐ For entertainment
☐ A friend’s recommendation
☐ The brand has said/posted something interesting
☐ You like the brand
☐ Other (please specify) ____________________
Q16 Please rate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand X’s social media interacts with me to serve me better.</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand X’s social media works together with me to produce offerings that better suit me.</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand X’s social media interacts with me to design offerings that meet my needs.</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand X’s social media provides services in conjunction with me.</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand X’s social media allows my involvement in providing services to me to get the experience that I want.</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q17 Please rate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When I engage with Brand X on social media I view pictures of the brand or product in social media.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I engage with Brand X on social media I watch videos about the brand or product in social media.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I engage with Brand X on social media I read about the brands’ posts, user comments, or product reviews.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q18 Please rate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When I engage with Brand X on social media I engage in conversations about the brand (e.g., commenting, asking questions, and sharing questions).</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I engage with Brand X on social media I share the brands’ posts (e.g., videos, audio, pictures, or texts) on my own social media page.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I engage with Brand X on social media I recommend brand-related content to my social media contacts (e.g., retweeting).</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I engage with Brand X on social media I upload brand-related videos, audio, pictures, or images.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### III. Motivation and Fashion Consciousness

Q19 Please rate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements when considering factors that motivate you to engage with a brand on social media?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I will support Brand X to see them succeed.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand X's success will make me happy.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will support Brand X if they need help from consumers like me.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The good feeling I have when I support Brand X.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I care about Brand X's success.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q20 Please rate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements when considering factors that motivate you to engage with Brand X on social media?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
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<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Achieving my own personal goals.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand the scope of my influence.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectation to receive knowledge.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaining financial rewards.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaining recognition from peers.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting more acknowledgment and better acceptance of myself and my ideas.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q21 Please rate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I usually have one or more outfits that are of the latest style.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I must choose between the two, I dress for fashion, not for comfort.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An important part of my life and activities is dressing in-style.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important to me that my clothes be of the latest style.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A person should try to dress in style.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IV. Demographic Information

Q22 What is your gender?
☐ Male
☐ Female
☐ Other

Q23 Which of the following best describes your age?
☐ 18 – 24
☐ 25 – 30
☐ 31 – 35

Q24 Which racial or ethnic group do you identify with most?
☐ African-American (non-Hispanic)
☐ Asian/Pacific Islanders
☐ Caucasian (non-Hispanic)
☐ Latino or Hispanic
☐ Native American or Aleut
☐ Multiracial
☐ Other

Q25 What is your present marital status?
☐ Single
☐ Married
☐ Other

Q26 Which of the following best describes your housing situation?
☐ Dorm
☐ Rent
☐ Own, paying mortgage
☐ Own, no mortgage

Q27 Please check the category that identifies your (household if married) income last year:
☐ < $40,000
☐ $40,001 – $50,000
☐ $50,001 – $60,000
☐ $60,001 – $75,000
☐ $75,001 – $100,000
☐ $100,001 – $125,000
☐ > $125,000
Q28 Please indicate your highest level of education:
☑ High School Graduate
☑ Current College Student
☑ Technical School/Some College
☑ 4-year College Graduate
☑ Graduate Degree

Q29 What is your occupation?
Appendix B

IRB Form for Approval of Surveying

Dear Yingjiao Xu:

Date: November 14, 2016
IRB Protocol 9505 has been assigned Exempt status
Title: Evaluation of Engagement on Social Media Among Millennial Consumers with Fashion Brands
PI: Xu, Yingjiao

The research proposal named above has received administrative review and has been approved as exempt from the policy as outlined in the Code of Federal Regulations (Exemption: 46.101. Exempt b.2). Provided that the only participation of the subjects is as described in the proposal narrative, this project is exempt from further review. This approval does not expire, but any changes must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation.

1. This committee complies with requirements found in Title 45 part 46 of The Code of Federal Regulations. For NCSU projects, the Assurance Number is: FWA00003429.
2. Any changes to the protocol and supporting documents must be submitted and approved by the IRB prior to implementation.
3. If any unanticipated problems or adverse events occur, they must be reported to the IRB office within 5 business days by completing and submitting the unanticipated problem form on the IRB website: http://research.ncsu.edu/sparcs/compliance/irb/submission-guidance/.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Deb Paxton
919.515.4514
IRB Administrator
dapaxton@ncsu.edu
NC State IRB Office

Jennie Ofstein
919.515.8754
IRB Coordinator
irb-coordinator@ncsu.edu
NC State IRB Office